

From Silence To Speaking:
A Pastoral Approach to Empowering Voices of
Korean Female Survivors of Sexual Abuse

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Sexual abuse of women has been emerging as one of the most widespread forms of violence against women. Despite an increase in reported cases, little is known about how women are affected by sexual abuse. The purpose of this study is to explore subjective experiences of Korean female survivors of sexual abuse and develop a pastoral context for working with them in the Christian church community in Korea. The objective is to enable pastors to use their gifts in pastoral care both to minister personally to survivors of sexual abuse and to mobilize the laity to provide care to the wounded. The design of this study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. The qualitative approach involves intensive personal interviews with Korean women who have been sexually abused, and who have broken their silence to tell the truth about their abuse.

The first chapter addresses the problem of sexual abuse in Korea and includes the purpose, method, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 reviews Korean literature on sexual abuse to see the cultural context of sexual abuse and establish the present status of this study in relation to existing research of sexually abused women in Korea. Chapter 3 presents life stories of four Korean female survivors of sexual abuse to give a holistic view of the impact of sexual abuse. In the profile of the survivors, six factors are included: family background, sexual abuse, effects, breaking the silence, religious

concerns, current status, and future life plans.

Chapter 4 discusses the impact of sexual abuse with respect to two questions: (1) What symptoms have survivors suffered? and (2) How has the Korean culture affected their experience of sexual abuse? Chapter 5 explores the transition from silence to speaking, focusing on its implications for survivors from two perspectives: (1) object-relations theories and (2) a feminist view of women's epistemological development. In that chapter, a model of survivor groups, focusing on life stories, is developed for the purpose of empowering the voices of sexual abuse survivors. Chapter 6 attempts to create a context of pastoral care through a critical revision of traditional understandings of God, Jesus, and sin. This is followed by a discussion of pastoral empowerment for sexual abuse survivors, which is discussed at congregational, group, and individual levels with a particular concern for the community of the Korean church. Chapter 7 closes the study by identifying issues that need further research.

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The theme and questions related to family and death in Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults: Exploring the Fabric of Life. Copyright © 1991 by James E. Birren and Donna E. Deutchman. Used by permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.

Acknowledgements

This study is written in two languages. One is English, which I have learned in the United States, and the other is a language that I have recovered from my experience as a survivor of sexual abuse. It was, and still is, hard for me to learn English as my second language, but at least it has its grammar to guide me. Learning to articulate the truth behind my symptoms from sexual trauma was, as in most societies, something new, uncharted, and little supported by my Korean culture. I came to it through a much slow and evolving process.

Through my healing process, I realized that my own silence was in the way. All my relationships, the internal one between me and God, and the external ones with others, were impacted by the weight of my silence. I wanted to be whole. But, I could not be without breaking the silence and risking the inevitable vulnerability. When I did so, my vulnerability led me to deeper levels of understanding about myself and about God, and it enabled me to tap into my inner power. This process of discovery motivated me to search for and listen to voices of other Korean women who have been sexually abused.

I remember each of these women who shared their most inner voices. They allowed me to learn that their stories were not those of victims, but rather heroic stories filled with pain, sorrow, anger, hope, and challenges. It was awesome to witness their struggles for life and their searches for the self and God through their life experiences. I thank these women, my co-researchers, for their willingness and courage to share their voices. They are very special people. I would also like to thank the Korea Violence Relief Center (한국성폭력상담소), the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a pretty little room in a very pretty little house. It was a sunny, bright, cheerful house, and there were lots of friendly people there, her whole family and all her friends. It was really quite cheerful, quite pleasant, and quite enjoyable. All the rooms were full of light, shining and pretty, and sparkling clean. And the little girl felt very good and very happy except for one thing. When she was very, very, very little, she had discovered a secret room in her house. And that secret room seemed to be unknown to everyone except her. She was the only one who went there, and she seemed to be the only one who knew about it. It was a small room, a dark room, and she was afraid to let anyone know about her secret room because she thought maybe she had just made it up and no one would believe her. And so she never let on to anyone about her secret room.

And it came to be that as the days passed, she spent more and more time in her secret room and less and less time in the sunny, cheerful rooms outside with the others. And sometimes when she was in her room, her little secret room, she would be afraid she would get locked in and not be able to get out again, and this would frighten her very much. At those times she would come out of her room in a great hurry, and for a while she would make herself very busy joining with the others and doing whatever it was that they were doing and pretending that there was no secret room in her house. But sooner or later she always went back. And she continued to go there more and more often. She lost her cheerfulness and her happiness, and she began to feel very lonely because, when she spent so much time in her secret room, she had to interrupt the games that she played with the others. Sometimes even right in the middle of hearing a story, she felt she had to stop, make up an excuse, and run to her secret room.

One day as she was sitting there asking herself, "Why am I here? Why am I so confused?" she heard a little voice, laughing, coming out of the corner of the room. The little voice said, "Hee, hee, hee, because you are bad. You are a bad girl because you put on that bad mask." And the little girl said, "What bad mask?" The little voice said, "Reach up and feel it." She reached up and sure enough, she felt a mask on her face. Oh,

she was so frightened and angry! She jumped up and tore the mask off and threw it on the floor. The little voice in the corner said, "Hee, hee, hee ... The next time you come in, you must first put on your mask of badness." And the little girl said, "Go away. I don't want to talk to you. Go away." Then she rushed out of the secret room and slammed the door. Outside the room she looked all around, frightened that someone had heard her slam the door and might find out about the secret room.

And so the days passed. And more and more, right in the middle of being hugged, or right in the middle of really enjoying herself, right in the middle of enjoying new friends and doing all the things she really liked doing, she would have to stop herself, make an excuse, and run back to shut herself up in her little room. Soon, whenever she was away from the room, she began to worry that someone would find out about her room. And she told herself, "Then I won't have it all to myself anymore, and they'll laugh at me and make a fool of me like that horrible little voice in the corner." So more and more often she went into her room, her little dark room, and locked herself in. And she thought, "It is my secret," and the little voice in the corner said, "Hee, hee, hee ... you have your mask on again." And the little girl would take the mask off and think about tearing it up, but she never could do it. She grew afraid as she thought, "Pretty soon I'll be spending all of my time in my little room, alone. I seem to be there more and more often now." And she looked downcast and felt so unhappy. She was so, so very unhappy. She didn't know what to do.

One day, when she had just come out of her secret room, just before she closed the door, she noticed that someone was sitting beside the door. So she hastily closed the door. And then she tried to pretend that she was just walking around. She smiled and she said, "Hello, who are you?" She saw, sitting there, a very old woman. The old woman was smiling at her. And the old woman said, "I saw your room." Oh, oh, oh, the little girl felt terrified, and she began to shake. "Oh, no," she said, "there is no room. There is no room. No, no room." The old woman smiled and said, "It's a secret room, isn't it?" And the little girl said, "No ... no room. There is no room." The old woman smiled and said, "But I saw it. And you spend a lot of time in there, don't you?" The little girl began to cry and nod her head. And the old woman said, "When you go in, there is a mask you put on, isn't there?" And the little girl said, "How do you know?"

And the old woman said, "I know because I have known other little girls and boys, and they also have secret rooms, and when they go in, they also put on masks so they can confuse themselves ... And there's a voice that talks to you in there, isn't there?" And the little girl nodded miserably. The old woman said, "And the little voice calls you a bad girl, right?" And the little girl really began to sob, as she said, "Oh, please, please, tell me what to do. I don't know what to do." And the old woman said, "Yes, you do. Yes, you do." "No, I don't. No, I don't," said the little girl, and the old woman said, "You can listen for other voices." And the little girl said, "I don't know how to do that." The old woman said, "Next time you go in, leave the door open." "OOOH, I couldn't do that ...," said the little girl. "If I leave the door open, then, other people will know I have a secret room." And the wise old woman nodded and said, "And then it won't be secret anymore." And the little girl said, "Yes." And the old woman said, "And then ... ?" "Well, I don't know," said the little girl. So the old woman said, "I will go with you. Will you go with me and together we'll leave the door open?"

The little girl trembled and shook with fright, but she took the old gnarled hand extended to her. And together they went into the little secret dark room. And they left the door ajar. With the light shining into the room, the little girl looked around and saw that there were many, many creatures in there. They looked very friendly. And she saw with surprise and delight that they all looked very much like her. "Oh," she said to the old woman, "look at all these little friends, and they all look like me." And the old person nodded and smiled. She said, "Would you like to speak to them?" "Well, I don't know," said the little girl. And the little voices all said in a chorus, "Oh, yes, please speak to us." But the other voice in the corner said, "Dummy, put on your mask. Quick, put on your mask so you'll be confused." And the other voices said, "No, no, no, don't do it. Don't listen to him, listen to us."

And so they began to talk to her, and they said, "You made this room a secret because you didn't let any light in." And the wise old woman nodded. The little girl said, "Well, I've left the door open now." "Yes, yes," they said, "look around." And she looked around and saw that there were other doors, and she saw that there were windows. And the little friends said, "Open them, open them." So she went to the windows and she opened one. When she looked through it, she saw a wonderful, wonderful scene - it was

a beautiful countryside. They said, "Open another one ... open another one!" They were all excited and happy for her. And so she opened another, and there she saw a beautiful library, full of books and records, and there were people singing and dancing. Others were reading and learning, and then to her astonishment, she found door after door, and she saw that her secret room really had no walls, but was all doors and windows. She went from one to another, leaving them open, and she found that she could go from her secret room into any place she chose.

She turned to the old woman and said, "Oh, what a magical world." And the old woman nodded and said, "Yes, that is the secret you wouldn't let yourself know. You have all these doors, and you can open them to a wonderful world." The little girl looked all around and saw that her secret room was full of light and windows and open doors. She walked out, and she said to her family and her friends, "I want you to meet my new friend ... my old...", but when she turned, her old friend was waving good-bye and saying, "You don't need me anymore." So the little girl turned to share her secret with her family and her friends and invited them to come into her secret room, which was no longer a secret, and there she introduced all her new friends.¹

This dissertation is about trauma, transformation, and hope. It is born out of my experiences as a Korean woman, a survivor of sexual abuse, and a feminist pastoral counselor who seeks to listen to the stories of Korean women and to lift the veil of silence of sexual abuse. This study explores stories of four Korean women who have been sexually abused, and who have broken the silence despite the fear they have felt.

The thesis of the study is: An analysis from cultural, psychological, and theological perspectives of the subjective experiences of women, who have been sexually abused and who have broken their silence, reveals: (1) the destructive effects of sexual violence, (2) the way Korean culture relates to sexual abuse survivors, and (3) healing resources to

¹ The story presented here is adapted from Lee Wallas, *Stories for the Third Ear* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 71-5, with permission of W. W. Norton & Company (copyright © 1985 by Lee Wallas).

meet survivors' needs and empower their journey of healing from sexual abuse. And, those findings, I hope, will expand knowledge of the healing of sexual abuse and be of use for pastoral care givers in caring for survivors of sexual abuse.

The Problem

The awareness of sexual abuse has changed in focus and scope during the last three decades in Korea. Sexual abuse in families was not considered a possibility in the 1960s and the 1970s. Sexual abuse of prostitutes was only beginning to be recognized in this period.² Recognition of violence in families only appeared in the mid-1980s.³ Not until the early 1990s was sexual abuse at home and at work recognized and researched.⁴ This does not mean that sexual abuse was relatively rare or that its victims were not traumatized before the 90s in Korea. It might be just the opposite: sexual abuse may have been taken for granted by the majority of Koreans: sexual abuse was considered sex rather than violence: moreover, even when it was occasionally identified, it was believed that in Korean society revealing it might bring more stigma than healing to survivors.⁵

It is difficult to estimate accurately the prevalence of sexual abuse in Korea. Most sexual abuse cases are not reported. And there are only a few studies that attempt to determine the prevalence of sexual abuse of women. A 1988 report of criminal statistics

² Jae-sok Choi, "The Development of Studies on Women in Prostitution in Korea" (in Korean), Journal of Asian Women 20-21 (1981-82): 13.

³ Korean Women's Hot Line, The Battered Wife, the Broken Life (in Korean) (Seoul: Korean Women's Hot Line, 1992), 17.

⁴ Sun-gil Na, Women and Society: In Love and in Agony toward a New Society (in Korean) (Seoul: Dongah University Press, 1994), 195.

⁵ Ming-sun Lee, "A Feminist Approach to Rape: Centering around the Cases of Female Victims" (in Korean) (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1989), 66.

shows that the rate of reported rape doubled between 1975 and 1985,⁶ and the female victims tended to be children in this period.⁷ A 1990 study of 2,270 women found that 76.4 percent of the women had experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, 21.8 percent had experienced rape or attempted rape, and 6.5 percent had been molested as children.⁸ A 1991 study of 696 women reports that 15.4 percent of the women experienced “severe sexual abuse” at their work place.⁹ A 1993 study of 458 women indicates that 87 percent of the women experienced sexual harassment at work.¹⁰ Findings of the studies vary because in Korea there is no standard definition for sexual harassment that comprehensively addresses age, types of abuse, and regional differences.

Although the picture of the prevalence of sexual abuse is far from complete, what cannot be denied is that sexual abuse is affecting women in alarming numbers. The Korean Sexual Violence Relief Center, established in 1992 as the first crisis center founded and staffed by women activists, began to unmask further the pervasiveness of sexual abuse in Korean society. On the basis of their analysis of the four-year case load received by the center, they report that one out of every four victims of sexual abuse (28.5 percent) is a child. The majority of perpetrators are acquaintances (72 percent)

⁶ The Office of Supreme, “The Criminal Statistics” (in Korean). Cited in Jung-hyun Nam, “Rape in Korea,” Mental Health Research 9 (1990): 14-25.

⁷ Jung-hyun Nam, 18.

⁸ Korean Institute of Criminology, Sexual Violence and Its Countermeasures in Korea (in Korean) (Seoul: Korean Institute of Criminology, 1990), 87.

⁹ Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Resource Book I: Sexual Harassment at Work (in Korean), Seoul, 1992, 38.

¹⁰ Committee of United Advocacy Efforts for the Case of Sexual Harassment of Miss Woo in Seoul National University, From Silence to Speaking Out (in Korean), Seoul, 1994, 45-7.

rather than strangers. And a significant number of the acquaintances consist of family members. Thus, there is a high rate of incest (24.9 percent).¹¹

Researchers and volunteers at crisis centers believe that these figures are lower than the actual occurrence of sexual abuse due to several reasons. First, the majority of victims of sexual abuse do not report the crime to the police (98.8 percent).¹² Second, the majority of rape survivors do not seek professional help (96.7 percent).¹³ And, third, there are many people who underrate sexual abuse; sexual abuse in marriage is not considered to be violence (78.2 percent).¹⁴ Because of these factors, researchers believe that the incidence of sexual abuse is much greater than statistics have indicated. It is estimated that rape occurs in Korea as many as 877 times a day and 37 times an hour.¹⁵ And, it might be worse. According to the Police Bureau in 1992, the rate of rape in Korea was third highest in the world.¹⁶

While surveys and reports show different results, they do reveal a serious social problem. Many people have been sexually abused and survivors are found in all socio-economic classes, educational levels, and age groups.¹⁷ They are found in all types of

¹¹ Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Sexual Abuse, Its Problem and Solution: Symposium (in Korean), Seoul, 1994, 3-4.

¹² Korean Institute of Criminology, 90.

¹³ Ibid., 217.

¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵ Korean Women's Coalition for the Project of Prevention Laws of Sexual Violence, Toward a Society Free of Sexual Violence: Data for Rape Prevention I (in Korean), Seoul, 1992, 8.

¹⁶ Cited in Kyung-za Lee, "A Study on Preventive Measures of Sexual Violence" (in Korean), Women Studies 10 (1992): 5.

¹⁷ Korean Institute of Criminology, 138.

families, work places, educational institutes, and religious groups. Studies also show survivors often suffer alone with the effects of sexual abuse, since they keep their experience of abuse to themselves (43.8 percent). Few seek professional help (3.3 percent).¹⁸ An emerging picture of the survivors of sexual abuse is that while they are large in number, they remain invisible, voiceless, and seemingly absent in society. The invisibility and voicelessness of survivors needs to be understood in the cultural context as a sign of neglect rather than as a sign that little damage has occurred, an issue dealt with in Chapter 4.

It is worth noting that the psychological trauma of sexual abuse refuses to be buried¹⁹ and, when the abused are neglected or condemned, their rage surfaces, often in the form of homicide or other self-destructive behaviors. This is certainly the case in Korean society. It is not accidental that two murder cases were laid at the door of the 1990s feminist movement against sexual violence. Two abuse victims, one of child rape and the other of incest, ended up killing their abusers after suffering silently for decades. The rape victim had suffered for over twenty years since the age of nine. She could not accept herself and her two marriages failed. The incest victim had suffered, along with her mother who was also a victim, from a three-sided sexual relationship with her stepfather, for twelve years. Their abuse was invisible, and they probably looked normal, but they suffered terribly, alone behind the veil of silence, before they tragically took extreme action: the daughter killed her stepfather with the help of her boyfriend. Sexual traumas cannot be undone through silence or forgetting. When neglected and condemned,

¹⁸ Ibid., 216.

¹⁹ Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery (New York: BasicBooks, 1992), 1.

the abused can become as destructive as those who dehumanized and destroyed them.

In a similar way, the psychological trauma of sexual abuse, when ignored, turns inward and has a profound impact on the victim's identity and outlook on life. It may not be coincidental that many prostitutes identify themselves as victims of sexual abuse before they turned to prostitution. Of 4,653 women in prostitution, 11.8 percent were sexually abused before they entered prostitution and attributed their current situation to their experience of sexual abuse.²⁰ Among 96 female survivors of sexual abuse, 11.4 percent admitted that their experiences of sexual abuse were life-shattering and precipitated their becoming prostitutes.²¹

Researchers noticed a radical change in women's identity as a result of sexual abuse and found it similar to the "damaged goods" syndrome observed in rape victims in other cultures.²² However, they also noticed a difference in that Korean victims seemed more vulnerable to acting out the damaged goods syndrome: not only did they believe that they were irrevocably damaged but also tended to become what they believed they were, as in the case of rape victims becoming prostitutes. This devastating consequence of sexual abuse was observed as "particularly Korean"²³ and was explained in relation to the cultural value of female chastity.

While the impact of sexual abuse can find expression in such destructive behaviors

²⁰ The House of Davita, A Project for the Social Restoration of Women in Prostitution (in Korean), Seoul, 1994, 75.

²¹ Kyung-za Lee, 16.

²² Ming-sun Lee, 60. See also Sung-sook Park, "Consequences and Treatment of Sexual Abuse in Children and Adolescents" (in Korean), Mental Health Research 9 (1990): 28-32.

²³ Ming-sun Lee, 61. See also Jong-mo Yoon, "Understanding Sexual Abuse and Pastoral Counseling I" (in Korean), Christian Thought 36, no. 7 (1992): 75.

as homicide or prostitution, it may also be interrelated with or ruling the victim's inner world. Regarding the immediate impact of rape, 150 victims reported that they went through intense psychological distress and were tormented with feelings of fear (16.6 percent), anger (21.2 percent) and shame and worthlessness (54.9 percent).²⁴ Of women expressing anger, many suffered from the wish to seek revenge (11.9 percent). Women who were more prone to shame and worthlessness suffered from the wish to die (21.9 percent) and tended to become promiscuous (6.6 percent).

As time passed, their intense psychological distress gave way to more chronic problems: insecurity, difficulties in relationships, no boundaries or rigid boundaries in intimacy, career problems, and chemical abuse.²⁵ The pain and emotional turmoil caused by sexual abuse can be silenced, but that does not mean they have been alleviated for most sexual abuse survivors. Survivors revisit the trauma whenever they feel they are in trouble and suffer from unresolved wishes to kill, to die, to be a prostitute, to avoid intimacy, or to do whatever is necessary to escape their original trauma. This internal turmoil may not be heard or seen on the outside but nevertheless it is present in the victims' inner reality.

While the hidden problem of sexual abuse has been unmasked since the early 1990s and the previously unheard cries from survivors have come into the open, broader society remains ignorant about these problems. Communities provide remarkably few programs to prevent sexual violence and little support to help survivors cope with the devastating impact of sexual abuse.

²⁴ Korean Institute of Criminology, 107.

²⁵ Kyung-za Lee, 16.

Not surprisingly, the church community in Korea has participated in the silence of society. Nevertheless within the church, survivors of sexual abuse, perhaps in even greater numbers than in the larger society, do expect help; women make up seventy percent of church attendees in Korea.²⁶ Moreover, the church has taught that individuals have intrinsic worth and dignity and that life has meaning. It might be that survivors of sexual abuse are always found around the church because they hope to heal rather than bury their suffering. But, unfortunately, their hope for finding healing from sexual abuse might result in shame once again if the church is not ready to help.

I believe healing from sexual abuse starts with the ears hearing the cries, even those cries that have been silenced and previously unheard, and with the hands providing comfort and protection. It is time for the church to be a Good Samaritan to survivors of sexual abuse, stepping out of its patriarchal paradigm and raising questions about the nature of any community. In the community, sexual violence is not only perpetrated but its victims are made to pay the price for the community's silence and inability to prevent the abuse. The church needs to be a healing community and a prophetic community which listens to the survivors' suffering and provides comfort, meaning, and justice for their spiritual well-being, and takes steps to prevent the occurrence of abuse. This is the interest of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of the study is to provide a new vision for pastoral care for sexual abuse survivors in Korea by exploring Korean women's subjective experience of sexual

²⁶ Nam-soon Kang, "Is the Community of the Korean Church Egalitarian?: Women's Consciousness and their Position in the Church" (in Korean), Christian Thought 40, no. 4 (1996): 143.

abuse. Pastoral care never takes place outside the confines of socio-cultural systems. It is always in a specific context, in this case, Korean patriarchal society. Most Korean male ministers do not understand women's experience, particularly, the experience of sexual abuse survivors. Korean pastoral care can take on a different sensitivity and perspective when trauma stories of Korean women are finally heard, and when a healing approach is informed by theological and psychological approaches suited to the survivors' experiences.

For the purpose of the study, I analyze Korean women's subjective experience of sexual abuse from cultural, psychological, and theological perspectives, to understand those issues: the destructive effects of sexual abuse, the way Korean culture relates to sexual abuse survivors, and healing resources to meet survivors' needs and empower their journey of healing from sexual abuse.

In Chapter 1, I deal with issues related to the procedure of this research such as the problem, the purpose, the method, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 reviews Korean literature on sexual abuse in order to provide information and establish this study in relation to existing research of sexually abused women in Korea. Chapter 3 presents stories of four women who were sexually abused and began to speak about their experiences of sexual abuse. The women's stories are presented in such a way that six dimensions of their experiences are included: family background, sexual abuse, after-effects, breaking silence, religious concerns, and current status and future plans.

Chapter 4 clarifies the impact of sexual abuse in the context of Korean culture. This chapter focuses on two questions: (1) What symptoms have they suffered? and (2) How has Korean culture affected the women's experience of sexual abuse? Chapter 5 addresses the

transition from silence to speaking for sexual abuse survivors. The importance of telling the truth is discussed and its implications for sexual abuse survivors are examined from three perspectives: object relations theories, women's epistemological development, and women's group dynamics. The thesis, discussed in the previous sections, is materialized through a model of autobiography groups for sexual abuse survivors.

Chapter 6 discusses theological and pastoral issues from the perspective of sexual abuse survivors. The first section establishes criteria for assessing theological notions by analyzing the survivors' experience of sexual abuse. The second section critically examines, using the criteria, ways in which the notions of God and Jesus' suffering relate to sexual abuse survivors. The third section seeks to contextualize pastoral care for sexual abuse survivors, exploring a Korean pastoral tradition and identifying its useful resources for survivors in terms of the criteria discussed in the previous sections. In addition, pastoral ways to empower sexual abuse survivors are explored first in relation to theological issues and then to the role of the pastor in the context of the Korean churches. Finally, in Chapter 7, I go back and review the thesis of the study, articulating what I learned and what are the suggestions I wish to share in terms of further research.

Method of the Study

The method of this study includes three steps: a review of literature on Korean female survivors of sexual abuse; interviews with Korean women who have experienced sexual abuse, and who have begun to speak about their abuse experiences; and the exploration of a model for healing the traumatized Korean survivors of sexual abuse.

Data collection was done in the following sequence. First, computer and library searches located written materials about Korean women who have been sexually abused.

Unpublished materials from crisis centers were added. Second, five women survivors were interviewed; one interviewee of the five canceled her contract later. So her interviews are not included. Each woman was interviewed twice. Each interview was three hours long and conducted at the home of the interviewee except for one; one of the women was interviewed at a meeting room in a school. The content of the interviews was taped, transcribed, and analyzed for common themes. The interview was intended to answer two research questions: In what way does sexual abuse affect women? What are the needs of sexual abuse survivors? To protect those I interviewed, I have used pseudonyms to refer to them. The third segment of this dissertation is a discussion of the findings of the interviews. For this task, object relations models are employed to explore the possibility of silence from an inner reality; epistemological development of women is introduced to understand the same issue as well as the influence of social contexts on survivors' realities.

Definitions

Sexual abuse is unwanted physical contact, physical display, or verbal insinuation regarding the body that is perpetrated in secret.²⁷ The perpetrator is often in a position of trust, and always in a position of power, in relation to the victim. In this respect, the nature of sexual abuse involves the unjust use of power, whether it is between adults and children or among adults.²⁸ Abusive sexual contact can be measured by the duration of

²⁷ Adrienne Crowder, Opening the Door: A Treatment Model for Therapy with Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1995), 1.

²⁸ James N. Poling, The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 23.

these activities and the degree of intrusion from exhibitionism to intercourse.²⁹

In this study, the term sexual abuse is used to refer to any form of manipulative or forced sexual interaction between an individual and a person or a group. I use sexual abuse as a general term, interchangeable with sexual violence. Particular forms include incest, rape, marital abuse, and sexual harassment. Incest refers to sexual contact with anyone considered an inappropriate sexual partner because of blood ties. It can be either overt or covert, depending upon the victim's experience of feeling abused or privileged.³⁰ Rape refers to any forced sexual intercourse, and marital abuse includes physical, sexual or emotional mistreatments between partners in marriage. Sexual harassment refers to any inappropriate verbal or physical interactions in any social context.³¹

These terms are useful to sort abusive sexual contacts by degree of intrusiveness or inappropriate relationship, but they have little to do with subjective experiences of the victim of sexual abuse. In this respect, I use another set of definitions of sexual abuse to describe the victims' subjective experiences and limit the above terms to refer to sexual abuse in a formal way. Sexual abuse is defined as a triple experience when used to refer to the perspective of the victim. In this sense, it is defined as violence against the body, psychological and spiritual distress, and isolation by secrecy. This definition of sexual

²⁹ Yvonne M. Dolan, Resolving Sexual Abuse: Solution-Focused Therapy and Ericksonian Hypnosis for Adult Survivors (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 2.

³⁰ Kenneth M. Adams defines incest as "overt" and "covert" according to the dynamics involved. He states: "An important difference between overt and covert incest is that, while the overt victim feels abused, the covert victim feels idealized and privileged." Silently Seduced: When Parents Make Children Partners: Understanding Covert Incest (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1991), 10.

³¹ Peter Rutter, Sex, Power, and Boundaries: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment (New York: Bantam Books, 1996), 1-15.

abuse can be stated more concisely as a triple-experience of the power-over, ill-being, and invisibility. These terms are introduced in Chapter 6 to place subjective experiences of sexual abuse survivors in the context of theological discourse.

In addition to sexual abuse, I use several terms to describe the context of Korean culture, the transition from silence to speaking, and women who have been sexually abused. Those terms are:

Breaking silence: This phrase is used to describe one's telling about his/her own sexual abuse to anyone whom he/she trusts personally or professionally. The phrase is not necessarily limited to the first occasion of telling about the abuse.

Gendered: This adjective is used to describe any experience, knowledge, and social systems which are shaped by gender. While the term "gendered" is generally understood more neutrally than "sexism" and "patriarchal," the three terms are used interchangeably in this study, referring to any truth or experience that is defined differently according to gender.

Intimacy: This term refers to an emotional bonding that gives a close, innermost quality to relationships. While intimacy refers to any emotional bonding with any object such as a person, a pet, or an idea, I use the term in this study to describe a state of a private relationship between opposite sexes in the context of Korean society.

Korean patriarchal culture: This phrase is used to describe any heritages shared by Koreans as a way of living in which men, because of their gender, are assigned power to govern society as well as their families.

Male-centered intimacy: This term is used to describe a state of a private relationship between opposite sexes, shaped by a Korean patriarchal culture, which

primarily service to meet men's needs rather than the mutual well-being of both sexes. While I use intimacy as a general term, referring to any intimate relationship between the opposite sexes, I limit male-centered intimacy to indicate a particular form of intimacy, shaped by a culturally defined male sexuality, which has little room for women's needs and well-being.

Speaking out: This phrase is used to refer to an individual's telling about his/her sexual abuse in such a way that he/she not only discloses but also challenges sexual abuse. The term connotes a more pro-active, committed quality than "breaking silence."

Survivor: This term is used to refer to an individual who has been sexually abused and who has been in transition from self-blaming for the abuse to self-care, regardless of whether he/she still suffers from sexual abuse.

Victim: This term is used to refer to an individual whose sexual abuse is on-going or a person whose abuse occurred in the past; in either case, the person is experiencing on-going, acute suffering. While the term "victim" usually indicates a person who is currently being abused, it is used in a more inclusive way in this study to refer to anyone who takes responsibility for sexual abuse and suffers not only from the sexual abuse itself but also from the guilt of the abuse, regardless of when it happened.

Limitations

This study is limited to the experiences of the population I refer to as adult Korean women. This means adult women with different ethnic backgrounds, or Korean children or males, are excluded. This does not mean that they do not suffer from abuse but only narrows the population with which I will be interacting. Next, the number of interviewees is limited since there are only a few Korean women who meet the two

conditions, the experience of sexual abuse and that of breaking silence. Besides these objective limitations, this study suffers from the lack of previously published clinical studies of Korean female survivors and survivors' personal reflections. Other than the interviews in this study, no such studies or personal reflections are available. One effort of this study is to link observable symptoms found in Korean survivors with invisible intrapsychic forces or structures.

The problem of sexual trauma requires vast research since it is inseparably intertwined with cultural, psychological, social, and religious factors. The attempt in this study, which is to understand the effect of sexual abuse and find a way to empower sexual abuse survivors in the church setting, is limited in its scope and in its depth due to the liabilities mentioned above. The urgent need in the researcher's mind is to open the experience of sexual abuse survivors to the church community and pastoral care givers in Korea; the purpose is to help them be more sensitive to survivors' sufferings and more ready to respond to their pastoral needs. The limitations of this study suggest that further research will be needed in order to expand the understanding of traumatization caused by sexual abuse and its spiritual implications and to develop healing models and guidelines for pastoral care givers.

CHAPTER 2

Female Survivors of Sexual Abuse in Korean Literature

In this chapter, Korean literature on female survivors of sexual abuse is reviewed. Three different perspectives are included: feminist sociology, counseling, and religion. The focus of the review is to see the cultural context of neglect in the aftermath of sexual abuse as well as the effects of sexual abuse. This review will establish the present status of this study in relation to existing research regarding sexually abused women in Korea.

Feminist and Sociological Studies

Literature on sexual abuse has appeared only in the past five years in Korea. Most studies have been done from feminist and sociological perspectives and show several common findings. First, sexual abuse in Korea is prevalent and pervasive as shown in Chapter 1. Sexual abuse is common and serious in women's lives. Second, the impact of sexual abuse is destructive: acute physio-psychological distress is followed by more chronic personality difficulty and relationship problems. And, third, in spite of the deep pain and destructiveness caused by sexual abuse, the majority of victims prefer not to report, not to seek help, and not to share their abuse experience with anyone. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 1, an emerging picture of survivors of sexual abuse is that they are numerous but nevertheless invisible and, in a sense, absent in society. Most studies argue it is the sociocultural context, not the personal attributes of survivors, that caused sexual abuse in the first place and then deepened its impact on victims to the point of silence about their experience.¹

¹ See Ming-sun Lee, "A Feminist Approach to Rape." See also Korean Institute of Criminology, Sexual Violence and Its Countermeasures in Korea.

Ock-kyung Lee, in a study not directly related to the issue of sexual abuse and its victims, described the historical context in which chastity emerged as the universal truth by which women were to live in Korea.² While female sexuality was controlled in ancient Korean society, according to Lee, it was the fifteenth century sociopolitical conditions -- complicated by hidden class interests and political dynamics -- that fostered, shaped, and justified the ideology of female chastity. Lee's work articulates the idea of female chastity as a sociocultural construct which has deeply influenced women in general and victims of sexual abuse in particular. Similarly, Yong-duk Kim has shown how the ideology of chastity has dehumanized women from the past to the early twentieth century.³ For example, widows had to remain widows until the day they died regardless of their situations; sexually abused women had to choose either to become prostitutes or to die honorably as yolyo (열녀), virtuous women. Almost all women who faced sexual assault, according to Kim, chose to die for their chastity, and "Korea became a nation of chaste women." Consistent with Kim, it may not be coincidental to find many yolyo in Korean history who were actually sexual abuse victims.⁴ While these two research studies are significant, their central themes are not about sexual abuse survivors. However, they do indirectly show the historical context in which sexually abused women had to die due to the ideology of chastity. This reveals a legacy from which today's survivors of sexual abuse are not fully free and still suffer.

² Ok-kyung Lee, "A Study on the Formational Condition and Settlement Mechanism of the Jeong Juel Ideology (Fidelity to Husband by Wife) of the Yi Dynasty: Through Reorganization of Ideology Critique" (in Korean) (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1985).

³ Yong-dok Kim, "On the Chastity of Women" (in Korean), *Journal of Asian Women* 3 (1964): 123-53.

⁴ Committee in Commemoration of King Sejong, *Three Important Values and Their Prototypes in Lives: Yolyo* (in Korean) (Seoul: Commemorative Committee of King Sejong, 1982).

Ming-sun Lee showed that Koreans' basic cognitive framework for interpreting sexual abuse is as sex and not as violence. This kind of stereotype places great burdens on female victims when dealing with the aftermath of their sexual abuse.⁵ All rape survivors Lee interviewed had internalized this view of sexual abuse. As a result, even the survivors of stranger rape who described their experiences as terrifying, painful, and humiliating failed to define what they experienced as rape. Instead, they dissociated themselves from their own experiences and, in line with the predominant cultural belief, perceived violent rape as sex. This internalized view of sexual abuse as sex was a major cause of internal turmoil. Furthermore, when it was associated with another internalized voice of culture, the virtue of female chastity, the level of internal turmoil was only increased.

The important aspect of Lee's study in relation to this dissertation concerns the cultural dimension of the trauma resulting from sexual abuse. According to Lee, the devastating consequences of rape are not due only to what the survivors experienced, such as the threat to life or loss of physical integrity, but rather to what they perceived they lost, their "chastity." They struggled less with the direct impact of rape and more with the meaning of rape as shaped by culture. In Lee's study, survivors perceived themselves as severely damaged by the rape, understood as sex, since it disqualified them from marriage. With the loss of chastity, their future had become vague and ill-defined. This devastating aspect of sexual abuse trauma was understood as "particularly Korean" due to the Korean culture, a sociocultural context in which female chastity overrides

⁵ Ming-sun Lee, 56.

human rights, and victims are punished again by the “double standards of sexual ethics.”⁶

Lee’s study showed the internal turmoil of rape victims as the result of the interplay between culture and sexual assault. This sociocultural aspect of trauma resulting from sexual abuse is found in another study about survivors of sexual abuse, persons known as “comfort women.” Comfort women are those who were forcefully dragged to Japanese military bases for use as sex objects during the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945). When the war was over, they came back to Korea and lived in silence until they heroically came out as survivors in 1991. Sang-wha Lee attempted to explain the emotional and adjustment difficulties experienced by the comfort women after they returned to Korea.⁷ Their dilemma was that they needed to marry to survive in a patriarchal society, but they were inhibited internally and externally. Internally, this was due to the guilt and shame that was deeply interwoven with their being; externally, it was due to the rigid marriage institution based on the ideology of female chastity. These women were forced to remain outside of the institution of marriage. When they became involved in intimate relationships with men, they remained concubines and often suffered emotional and physical abuse at the hands of their partners.

Sang-wha Lee’s study is significant, because it shows the interplay between sexual trauma and social systems in causing relational difficulties. They became victims thrice over, once at the hands of their captors, again in their own eyes, and finally by society. Comfort women suffered from the physical and psychological effects of sexual violence such as venereal diseases, impairment in pregnancy, somatic pains, flashbacks, sexual

⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷ Sang-wha Lee, “A Study on Military Comfort Women’s Experience: Centering on Changes in Their Consciousness” (in Korean) (Master’s thesis, Ewha Women’s University [Seoul], 1993).

dysfunction, and fear of intimacy. These serious consequences of sexual violence were held inside, silently shadowing and constricting the comfort women's whole being. In outer reality, they had to face traumagenic forces again, the inexorable belief systems and social structures that condemned them as lesser humans. Surrounded with these internal and external forces, these women suffered greatly, condemning themselves as well. Without this understanding of the interplay between inner and outer reality in the trauma of these women, the complexity and agony in these women's lives are less visible, which Lee's study articulated in sociological terms.

In 1993, an important collection of the life stories of "comfort women" was published. The book, Testimonies I: Korean Women Drafted for Military Service by Japan, presented the experiences of nineteen women who came out as survivors, some with their actual names and others with pseudonyms.⁸ Their stories poignantly revealed personal and national tragedies during World War II. In the book, they revealed how they were dragged to Japanese military bases, how they were used as sex objects, and how they were victimized again by the ideology of chastity when they came back to their home country.

Testimonies I deserves credit for making the voices of sexual abuse survivors heard for the first time in the history of Korean women. These stories of the survivors are also significant because they are firsthand accounts providing invaluable data for further research on the physical, psychological, and spiritual impact of sexual violence. In addition, the group of "comfort women" set an example to other survivors about how to tell trauma stories in the context of justice and to transform them into testimonies. It is

⁸ Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan and Research Center, Testimony I: Korean Women Drafted for Military Service by Japan (in Korean) (Seoul: Hanwool, 1993).

also noteworthy that “to hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance.”⁹ For the comfort women, this social context was the thirty-six women’s associations that united to found and support The Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. The coming out of these comfort women is evidence of the inseparable relationship between women’s voices and women’s political movements.

Studies in Counseling

By 1991, sexual abuse had become one of the most critical and sensitive issues in Korea. As a consequence, a prevention and crisis movement was launched in the same year. Women activists established crisis centers and started to provide emergency services along with legal services and medical care. Most victims of sexual abuse preferred phone-call contacts (95 percent), and when they did attend counseling, they limited themselves to one session (88.1 percent).¹⁰ Because of the nature of the service provided by crisis centers and because of survivors’ preference for phone calls, written materials from the centers are limited to reports of case loads, analyses of individual characters of victims and perpetrators, and educational data used for prevention. While works based on clinical and psychological research are remarkably few, a few articles and studies are available that deal with social attitudes towards rape victims.

Eun-woo Kim, an educational psychologist, studied conflicts in women’s lives

⁹ Herman, 9.

¹⁰ Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Resource Book: The Second Anniversary Data (in Korean), Seoul, 1993, 38-9.

from an existentialist viewpoint.¹¹ The data in his study was 128 cases found in women's magazines. These question-answer cases were grouped into seventeen categories according to the problems presented in the cases and analyzed in terms of four psychological issues. Case materials were presented under each of the four psychological issues. While the research was done in the 1960s and is outdated in some respects, it is a starting point for thinking about current issues for the counseling of sexually abused women. Of the cases studied, 32 percent of victims were sexually abused through manipulation or force. These women agonized about whether they could get married since they had lost their chastity.¹² Twenty-three percent were sexually involved with married men, and also struggled with their futures.¹³ Thus, from a feminist perspective, more than half of the cases fall under the category of sexual abuse.

The problem in Kim's study is that the women's problems that motivated them to seek help in the first place were dismissed in favor of more abstract explanations for the problems. The cases mentioned above were placed under two psychological issues: value confusion and lack of identity; both were interpreted in part as a reflection of a society in transition.¹⁴ The issue of sexual abuse was categorically missing. Thus, Kim's cases were characterized and dealt with as the problem of the women's personal, existential crises caused by their exposure to freedom, and not by the experience of violence. While Kim's research seems to be dangerously close to a victim-blaming

¹¹ Eun-woo Kim, A Study of Korean Women's Inner Conflict (in Korean) (Seoul: Korean Research Center, 1963).

¹² Ibid., 65.

¹³ Ibid., 65.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17.

response, it also reflects the limitations in thinking about sexual abuse in the sixties; sexual abuse as a category was not available for conceptual use at the time. Nevertheless, Kim's research illustrates a possible danger; when victims of sexual abuse are viewed through the lens of traditional male perspectives, they may be diagnosed as morally deficient in character and helped to correct themselves, while their violent experiences are completely ignored.

Victim-blaming responses to sexual abuse are not only found among researchers but among victims' families and among victims themselves. The response of victim-blaming has been studied by sociologists and discovered to be pervasive.¹⁵ Clinical observations have shown that when sexual abuse is discovered, the initial feeling of shock by parents, usually the mothers of the victims, is followed by outbursts of anger at their molested children.¹⁶ According to Sung-sook Park, a child-psychiatrist who dealt with a number of such cases, all mothers of rape and attempted-rape victims believed that their children could have avoided the sexual assault if they had only tried.¹⁷ Three mothers even yelled at their children; "Stupid, why didn't you call for help?" or "You could have gotten out of there." Of course, these mothers responded to their loved ones out of pain and anguish, but it is through such responses from loved ones that victims internalize shame and guilt: "Mom, I'm really sorry," or "I know I should not have been

¹⁵ Sun-young Kim, "A Study of Public Attitudes toward Rape" (in Korean) (Master's thesis, Ewha Women's University [Seoul], 1989). See Young-hee Shim, *Women in Society and Sexual Violence* (in Korean) (Seoul: Nanam, 1992), 246-50. See also two articles: Jung-hyun Nam, "Rape in Korea," Kwan-il Kim and Jung-hyun Nam, "Public Attitude toward Rape" (in Korean), *Mental Health Research* 9 (1990): 164-73.

¹⁶ Sung-sook Park, 26-36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

there.”¹⁸

In the case of incest, which means that the abuser is inside the family, family responses are not outbursts of anger but deadly silence with the message that it is not the victim but the perpetrator who must be protected.¹⁹ Young-ae Choi, a crisis center director, reported that incest victims were revictimized by familial neglect and condemnation when the abuse became known. Many were told (36.7 percent): “It brings shame on the family. You should shut up”; “If it’s your fate, what can we do?”; “It’s you who opened your legs.” Many families protected the perpetrators, usually fathers and brothers (37.9 percent), and attempted to cope with the unmasked incest by silencing and sacrificing the victims. This sacrificial silencing may be nothing but a reflection of what has already happened at the macro level in society. The incest victims in Choi’s study reported having intense fear of their abusers and anxiety about their personal safety, as well as having shame, guilt, rage, and depression to the point of suicide or acting out sexually in some cases. The majority of incest victims are minors, that is, children (56.5 percent) and adolescents (24.3 percent).

While little has been written concerning the psychological impact of judgment and condemnation on victims, studies on the basis of self-reported symptoms of sexual abuse from survivors reveal that the impact of neglect is as harmful as the impact of sexual abuse itself. Sung-sook Park introduced theories of diagnosis and treatment, first formulated in the West, for child victims of sexual abuse.²⁰ By use of these theories and

¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹ Young-ae Choi, “Situation of Intrafamilial Sexual Violence in Korea” (in Korean), Mental Health Research 9 (1990): 14.

²⁰ Sung-sook Park, 26-36.

her own clinical observations of the guilt and shame of child victims, she measured more accurately the negative influence of the victim-blame response. Another clinician, Ki-young Im, also addressed guilt and shame in child victims of sexual abuse. According to him, guilt and shame were compounded by many factors, such as the child's cognitive developmental stage, victim-blaming responses of significant others, and threats and manipulations from perpetrators.²¹ In addition, feminist counselors have paid attention to the negative impact of victim-blaming responses and have sought a feminist mode of counseling for survivors of sexual abuse in particular and for women in general.

Young-ae Choi, director of a crisis center, argued that sexual abuse is a gender-specific trauma undergirded by sexist society so that a feminist mode of counseling is necessary.²² She distinguished feminist therapy from traditional therapies by its recognition of the harmful effects of sexist society, its nonsexist frame of reference, and its goal of empowerment for survivors of sexual abuse.²³ In fact, the crisis center in which she has worked as a director has been in the forefront for advocating and demonstrating new attitudes to survivors of sexual abuse: the avoidance of victim-blaming and a supportive, nonstigmatizing view of sexual abuse as victimization. This feminist stance, along with active listening, emotional support, and providing information, has been at the core of the crisis intervention that the center has developed.²⁴

²¹ Ki-young Im, "Sexual Abuse Which May Happen to My Children" (in Korean), in Child Sexual Abuse: Seminars and Data, Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Seoul, 1991, 64.

²² Young-ae Choi, "Woman-Centered Counseling" (in Korean), in Resource Book: The Second Anniversary Data, Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Seoul, 1993, 33.

²³ Ibid., 34.

²⁴ Ibid., 15, 33-4.

Young-ae Kim, a pastoral counselor, criticized traditional theories of diagnosis and treatment as ineffective.²⁵ Women's experiences were categorically missing in existing theories, and women appeared deficient when compared to the male standards embedded in these theories. According to Kim, many women's problems such as depression, low self-esteem, and conflicts with in-laws are rooted in the sociocultural context of patriarchal society rather than in intrapsychic forces or personal attributes. This is true of sexual abuse as well. Sexual abuse is a gender-specific experience, she said, that may be easily dismissed for substitutes other than sexual abuse, as in the notable case of Freud's abandonment of his seduction theory. Many clinicians may miss the point, she warned, by not including sexual abuse in their diagnosing questions, and even when they get accurate information they may be defensive unless they unlearn what they have previously accepted as truth. Kim saw feminist therapy emerging in two ways in Korea: through telephone counseling in crisis centers and through consciousness-raising in women's groups. She provided guidelines for feminist therapy in working with women.

Studies from these crisis centers contributed to the breaking of silence on sexual violence. One important aspect of this contribution is that they provided survivors with new perceptions and terminology in order to name their previously unnamed experiences. This kind of cognitive restructuring helped survivors to avoid self-blaming and to seek community resources. In spite of these contributions, studies from crisis centers suffer from the lack of psychological research into the effects of abuse. Case studies based on clinical research are not yet available, since the centers have been established and run by

²⁵ Young-ae Kim, "Feminist Therapy: Its Theoretical Background and Methodology" (in Korean), in *Feminist Therapy: Symposium* (Seoul: Korea Women's Hot Line, 1994), 6-33.

women activists with sociological backgrounds. This issue will be dealt with in connection with post-traumatic stress symptoms in Chapter 4.

Discussions useful in developing feminist therapy are beginning to emerge. Feminist therapy has succeeded in articulating its philosophy at a cognitive level; now it faces an acute need to embody its philosophy in relating with sexual abuse survivors. It has, at least, brought to light harmful effects of traditional therapies when applied to women, especially sexually abused women, who do not take seriously women's perspectives. This issue will be dealt with in Chapter 5 in developing a feminist pastoral model of counseling for sexually abused women.

Studies in Christian Religion

The church's response to sexual abuse is similar to that of broader society. The issues of prostitution, comfort women, and individual victims of sexual violence have periodically intruded into the church's awareness and then been forgotten, one by one, leaving little impact on the church.

Women in prostitution first gained the attention of church women in the mid-1960s.²⁶ Subsequently, studies and ministries for prostitutes by church women contributed much to public awareness in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁷ Nevertheless, the church itself hardly addressed the issue, failing to ask questions about what it represents symbolically to the church, God, and human beings. Thus, studies of prostitution have suffered from overemphasis on objectivity and have failed to see the experience of

²⁶ Hyun-sook Lee, The Korean Association of Church Women United: Its History of 25 Years (in Korean) (Seoul: Korea Church Women United, 1992), 469-519.

²⁷ Ibid., 82-93, 251-78.

women in prostitution as a source of theology.²⁸

In the early 1990s, sexual abuse cases began to appear in court, as noted in Chapter 1. These incidents brought to light the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and made its devastating consequences obvious. Around the same time, the experience of comfort women began to be made public and became a critical issue in the community. Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, raised their voices against sexual violence and acknowledged it as a serious problem which shattered “trust in ourselves and our community.”²⁹ Women researchers in the church began to listen to the experiences of comfort women and reflected on their suffering in biblical prophetic language.³⁰

Compared to previous studies of prostitution, women’s writings in the 1990s reflected a radical shift in the understanding of sexual abuse survivors. Influenced by the idea that the personal is political, and faced with sexual abuse in women’s daily lives, emotional detachment, or overemphasis on objectivity, began to lift. Survivors, whether from prostitution or incest, were viewed as subjects whom the church needed to hear and learn from, rather than objects whom the church must endure with sympathy and then guide to adjust to existing social norms. This change is critical in Korean women’s history and may be illustrated in a feminist scholar’s reflection on a comfort woman’s words.

“I have no shame about myself when my age is over 70,” said a comfort woman,

²⁸ See Korea Church Women United, *Kisaeng and Tourism* (in Korean) (Seoul: Catholic Publishing House, 1984). See also “We Protest the Growing Sex Industry in Korea !” (in Korean), in *Women and Tourism* (Seoul: Korea Church Women United, 1988), 100-03.

²⁹ Human Rights Committee of Korea Church United, *Our Daughter Kwon* (in Korean) (Seoul: Minjung, 1987), i.

³⁰ Korean Association of Women Theologians, ed., *Biblical Look at the Meaning of Comfort Women’s Suffering* (in Korean) (Seoul: Feminist Theology Co., 1991).

when she visited Korea with her son after living for decades in Taiwan after the second world war. Sun-young Kim, a theologian, reflected on this old woman's homecoming: "What she represented symbolically is that good, no matter how bruised, had outlived evil, and that the moment when she came out as a comfort woman, her being was not that of shame but a critical challenge to all of evil, such as the crime of Japan, the ideology of female sexual chastity in Korea, and the shame itself which was always inside her. She is a liberated and liberating woman."³¹ Kim saw in the comfort woman's suffering the way personal tragedy is inseparably interwoven with sociopolitical injustice. Therefore, when the comfort woman came out as a survivor, Kim appreciated her being as a powerful witness to injustice, drawing upon her suffering as a source of feminist thought. This kind of appreciation has been missing in the previous studies of sexual abuse.

In Sexual Violence and Christianity, feminist scholars began to examine Christianity in terms of sexual violence.³² Sexual abuse of women in the Old Testament was articulated and turned to advantage for epistemology, "remembering and revisioning according to Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's hermeneutics of remembrance."³³ Teachings for women in the New Testament were criticized as doubly victimizing Korean women who had already been oppressed by Confucianism. The stories of Korean survivors were related to those of women in the Bible. The church was challenged to break silence,

³¹ Soon-young Kim, "The Meaning of Comfort Women's Suffering: As Seen Through the Story of Soo Bok Ro" (in Korean), in Biblical Look at the Meaning of Comfort Women's Suffering, 39-41.

³² Korean Association of Women Theologians, ed., Sexual Violence and Christianity (in Korean) (Seoul: Feminist Theology Co., 1995).

³³ Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 93-115.

name sexual violence as sin, and to take action.³⁴ For the purpose of this dissertation, what is critical in this study is its method. It included the experience of sexual abuse survivors as the prophetic norm and used it to test, not the secular community as before, but Christianity itself. It attempted to revise the traditions of Christianity and restore its prophetic role in society. Accordingly, it represents a major effort undertaken by feminist scholars in the 1990s.

Although sexual abuse has been increasingly recognized in society, and feminist theologians have begun to respond to it, the church community has kept silent. A strong challenge to the silence of the church came from a director of a crisis center. Choi, as a representative of victims of sexual abuse, reminded the church of its pastoral role. She suggested the church practice “no more silence” and be available to survivors of sexual abuse.³⁵ From her perspective, three forms of action were appropriate: (1) address the subject of sexual abuse in worship and education as a means of consciousness-raising; (2) train lay leaders and ministers and support crisis centers to help survivors; and (3) practice justice and equality within the church and be a task-force for eliminating sexual abuse in society.³⁶

Kwang-il Kim, a psychiatrist and a Christian, also appealed to clergy for support of victims of battering and marital rape. He pointed out that many ministers and lay leaders, uneducated about domestic violence and affected by cultural and religious beliefs about

³⁴ Hyun-sook Lee, “Christianity and Sexual Violence” (in Korean), in Sexual Violence and Christianity (Seoul: Feminist Theology Co., 1995), 39.

³⁵ Young-ae Choi, “Sexual Violence and the Task of Church” (in Korean), Christian Thought 37, no. 10 (1993): 149-54.

³⁶ Ibid., 154.

women, not only failed to help victims, but often became a “counter-force” against healing victims.³⁷ Moon-za Lee, a vice-director of a women’s hotline, addressed the misuse of biblical references which confused victims and led to their revictimization.³⁸ She also revealed clergy sexual abuse, an issue which is found to be more frequent than previously recognized. As Choi said, “So, the church must answer here.”³⁹

Seok-mo Ahn is one of two pastoral counselors who have put the issue of sexual abuse into a pastoral care and counseling perspective.⁴⁰ He examines myths and stereotypes of sexual abuse as roadblocks to the church’s ability to acknowledge the problem. In addition, he addresses the pastoral needs of sexual abuse survivors in terms of the shame and guilt involved in sexual abuse. He then emphasizes pastoral counseling as holistic care of the person in crisis. Ahn, however, misses the point when he suggests three questions as primary spiritual issues with which pastors can help survivors deal. He states that the most important spiritual question for victims of sexual abuse is: “Can I forgive him [the abuser]?” A second question is: “Can I stand before God with a pure body?” A third question is: “Is it all right and just to have anger or rage for unjust things?”⁴¹ It is disturbing to hear these questions without clear explanations for why such questions need to be addressed, something Ahn does not offer. Such questions

³⁷ Kwang-il Kim, “Clinical and Management of Wife Battering” (in Korean), Mental Health Research 6 (1987): 29.

³⁸ Moon-za Lee, “The Church Community and Its Problem” (in Korean), in Sexual Violence and Christianity, 105-13. See also Sook-za Chung, “Sexual Abuse in the Church and the Misuse of Rachel’s Story in the Bible” (in Korean), in Sexual Violence and Christianity, 91-104.

³⁹ Young-ae Choi, “Sexual Violence and the Task of the Church” (in Korean), 150.

⁴⁰ Seok-mo Ahn, “Sexual Abuse: How to Heal and Prevent?” (in Korean), Christian Thought 36, no. 6 (1992): 205-10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

mislead both the victim and the caregiver in spite of Ahn's good intentions, for they tend to reinforce shame and guilt in the victim rather than resolve them. Moreover, the frame of reference of the questions is traditional male values, lifted to a spiritual level. The question, "Can I stand before God with a pure body?" hints at the possibility that God is male and offended by sex. Nevertheless, Ahn's writing is the first to deal with sexual abuse in a pastoral context, and his work should be appreciated accordingly.

Jong-mo Yoon is the other of the two pastoral counselors who have responded to survivors of sexual abuse from a pastoral viewpoint. In an important article, Yoon states: "This problem has been ignored for a long time in Korea. There is little literature and research on this subject; few people acknowledge sexual abuse as violence, not sex; few ministers are concerned for victims of sexual violence and respond to their needs of healing."⁴² Yoon puts sexual abuse into a liberation theological perspective and calls for pastors to stand with victims. He attempts to explain cultural beliefs and myths about sexual abuse as a prerequisite for pastoral work with wounded women, especially because abuse victims are equally victims of the ideology of chastity.⁴³ In a second article, he emphasizes the need for pastors to understand the crisis experienced by survivors and to validate their feelings resulting from the abuse. Furthermore, pastors must not see women solely in terms of their chastity, in order to avoid putting responsibility on the victim instead of the abusers. This is essential for facilitating the

⁴² Yoon, "Understanding Sexual Abuse and Pastoral Counseling 1" (in Korean), 75.

⁴³ Ibid., 81. See also Yoon's other articles: "Problems Experienced by Women and Pastoral Counseling 1-4" (in Korean), *Christian Thought* 36, no. 10-12 (1992) and 37, no. 1 (1993).

survivor's healing from sexual abuse.⁴⁴

Yoon's writings are significant because they are the first to take seriously the impact of culture on the caregiver as well as the victim of sexual abuse in a pastoral care context. Although he did not make it explicit, gender and power were assumed as contextual issues for pastoral care in his emphasis on unlearning stereotypes about sexual abuse and female chastity as the prerequisite of pastoral care for survivors. Critiques of pastors given from other caregiving professionals have noted that the context for pastoral care is not free from gender and power. Pastoral care in the Korean context suffers from unexamined gendered consciousness and gendered experiences. In this regard, a clear understanding of pastors' values and basic assumptions is a central part of creating the context for pastoral care, especially because sexual abuse trauma is about gender and power. With such clarity, pastors are helped to be contextually sensitive and empathic to sexual abuse survivors. Yoon's writings have contributed much to this on-going discussion.

A circle of Catholic women has responded to violence against women and children in more practical ways than the Protestant church.⁴⁵ A book, Family Abuse: How Can I Help? was produced from a workshop on sexual abuse, including presentations, case studies, role plays, discussions, and reflections.⁴⁶ This workshop was offered by Marie Fortune and covered three major topics: wife battering, childhood sexual abuse, and reflections from biblical and pastoral perspectives. An important theme, justice, was

⁴⁴ Jong-mo Yoon, "Understanding Sexual Abuse and Pastoral Counseling 2" (in Korean), Christian Thought 36, no. 8 (1992): 86-7.

⁴⁵ Moon-za Lee, 107.

⁴⁶ Catholic Association of Social Justice in Seoul, Family Abuse: How Can I Help? (in Korean) (Seoul: Woozi, 1992).

emphasized as an essential part of healing; “felt healing” is closely related with “felt justice.” Thus, pastoral care was reevaluated from the perspective of creating multiple contexts in which justice is felt. Justice is felt at the moment when the victim is helped to tell, when the pastor attentively listens, when the pastor believes what is said with a deep empathic understanding, when the pastor takes action to protect the victim from the abuser, when the abuser admits his fault, when the abuser makes amends, and when the victim feels restored to herself.⁴⁷ The workshop report is a useful resource for pastors.

Two other studies are noteworthy in terms of their implications for survivors of sexual abuse, although sexual abuse is not their explicit subject. Women’s experiences have been recognized as a source of knowing and doing theology since the 1980s. Only recently, however, have women’s tellings of their own stories appeared in the literature. My Story is a collection of life stories of 25 women scholars and ministers from Protestant churches. This kind of book is significant, because it embodies the spirit of the 1980s studies in valuing women’s experience and solidarity through telling their own stories. This spirit of affirming our own stories is necessary if abuse survivors are to be empowered to tell the truth through their own stories.

Story Telling-Story Healing presents a new mode of pastoral care and counseling.⁴⁸

Young Kim, a pastor of a women’s church, re-imagined story as the context in which pastoral care occurs. Story is a context, according to her, in which people are called to care through their listening, and in which people are called to recover their voice through telling and retelling. Kim provided ideas such as “story circle,” “story study,” and “story

⁴⁷ Ibid., 141-44.

⁴⁸ Young Kim, Story Telling - Story Healing (in Korean) (Seoul: Yoogyo, 1994).

art” as well as “story intervention” for pastoral interventions. Kim states that she attempted to reshape traditional modes of pastoral care by focusing on hearing life stories rather than those in the Bible and sought to overcome the traditional image of the testimony by including other stories in the church. Kim’s study is significant because it recognizes story as a powerful tool for understanding and healing as well as for the context for care. Additionally, it provides an alternative to pastoral care for those working with survivors of sexual abuse.

In summary, there is not extensive literature on survivors of sexual abuse in social, counseling, and Christian studies in Korea. Studies in each area, however, have shed light on the prevalence of sexual abuse and have accordingly called attention to this problem. One major issue addressed by all studies is the way cultural beliefs are related to sexually abused women. They challenge the negative impact of patriarchal society on sexually abused women. While most make an effort to reveal the cultural forces that revictimize survivors of sexual abuse, few have brought light to the subjective experiences of survivors of sexual abuse and their healing from sexual abuse trauma.

CHAPTER 3

A Profile: Stories of Sexual Abuse Survivors

In this chapter, I present the life stories of four Korean women. They come from different backgrounds in terms of religion, education, social status, and age. One commonality they share is their experience of sexual abuse and breaking the silence. In presenting their stories, I address six factors; family background, sexual abuse, after-effects of the abuse, breaking the silence, religious concerns, and current status and future life plans. Stories presented in this chapter will be used as data for discussions in the following two chapters, analyzing experiences of sexual abuse and breaking silence.

Pain and Faith: Kim's Story

OK, I guess, I know what I am asking you. Can I ever get rid of that pain? I mean, I'm sure that there is no answer like this. But, have you found, OK, among the women you met, or from the case studies that you read, can you ever be fully free from that pain? . . . There is pain that I can feel truly, yet I don't know how to describe nor explain it.

Kim was a 23-year-old, single woman with long curly brown hair that fell around a soft, yet intense face. She was the only one of my interviewees who grew up in the United States though she had stayed in Korea for a time. She spoke with me in English except for a few Korean words. She seemed somewhat self-conscious but soon let herself go in a flow of casual zest. We sat for the interview in a quiet meeting room in a school to which Kim's relative belonged. As her story was unfolding, the two incidents that were most painful in her life became evident: the loss of her father and her rape as a child. Two words were most emotionally charged: emptiness and God.

Kim came from a strong, evangelical, Christian background. Both of her parents had seminary education: her father was a pastor, and her mother later became an

educational director and worked in a church for much of her life. When Kim was three years old, her father died of cancer. The loss of her father in her early years deeply affected her, and set in as an emotional emptiness that was a recurrent theme in Kim's story. At age 6, Kim's mother came to America, and Kim and her younger brother followed her 9 months later. The separation from her mother, though brief, activated a sense of fear of abandonment. Kim said, "First, it was my father who was taken away, and then I felt like it was my mother who was also taken away. There were a lot of emptiness . . . pain, and sadness."

At age 9, Kim was raped during the night while sleeping. It was most traumatic since it occurred in her bed where she should have felt safe. It occurred during the absence of her mother, who had stayed out that night for church work; this once again reminded Kim of the abandonment experienced in her earlier years. In addition, it was when Kim was gradually adjusting to the American culture which was totally new, both exciting and scary, to a nine-year old. No one else really saw the rapist, who ran away when her brother, who was sleeping in the same room at the time, woke up and ran out for help. Kim describes the incident:

It happened, I think, at two o'clock. I just remember, something woke me up, and someone was on top of me. . . . It happened pretty fast in my memory, it happened very fast. But, I think it took a while because a lot of things happened. I remember struggling, and just wanting him off. . . . He stuffed my underwear into my throat so I couldn't scream. I was struggling, upper body and lower body, . . . just struggling for breath and struggling to get him off. . . . My brother woke up and ran out. The first noise I heard was the landlord's screaming. Then, I remember, his wife putting a thick blanket over me. I still could feel myself shaking. What I remember was a thick blanket she put over me. The thing is now, when I put a thick blanket on me, I mean not all the times, but a lot of times, I remember that moment, that feeling, so scared.

It was a horrible event for Kim and for her whole family. Kim's mother was upset

when she came back the day after the rape and discovered what had happened to her daughter. She thought it best to keep it in the family, since it was a personal and painful event, and there was no clue about the rapist except for Kim's memory of harsh whiskers, alcohol breath, and pain in her body. The pressure from Kim's family not to tell was powerful, and everything was swept under the rug as a family secret. Kim remembered;

I didn't talk to anyone. It was almost like it didn't happen. We didn't talk about it within our family. We didn't talk. I didn't talk to my friends. I didn't go to see policemen, and I didn't see a counselor nor a doctor. I didn't see anyone. The only person who was with me was my mom, because she was taking care of me physically, physically -- because I needed a lot of healing, physically. I was bleeding. . . . And I remember feeling pain because my mom had to disinfect the wound, and so that it was very painful. It hurt when I went to the bathroom. . . . No one treated me emotionally, psychologically, nor spiritually, nothing. I received nothing.

Kim knew deep in her being she was not supposed to tell. She got that message and never told anyone except for a couple of her very close friends. Even when telling them, she was struggling with her family rule of "tell not." Until her junior year in high school, it was clear that it was not only her mother, but the whole Korean and Christian culture in which "virginity is such a big thing to women" that warned her not to tell anything for her own good. Along with this message, Kim began to suffer feelings of inadequacy as a woman, and feared any sign of abandonment whenever intimacy was the issue. She could not allow herself to be vulnerable, to be intimate, although she badly wanted it, because she lacked emotional closeness and care from men in her life. She bailed out before she got too close to any of them. On the one hand, she struggled with shame, inadequacy, and anger. She suffered from Christian and cultural teachings regarding female chastity: she clearly saw a shift in the nature of teachings -- from guidance to judgment and punishment. She said,

But the words in my mind at the time, I thought, if I am not a virgin, why try to save myself, for what? So, I went through all the process of shame. I felt dirty, sometimes angry toward men, then I withdrew myself from intimate relationships. Because at church it was taught, you know, you need to save yourself. And then, something happened to me, so I struggled with more than what happened to me, what is the point of saving myself? Why should I keep from promiscuity, when guys can? Not all guys and girls are like that, but a lot are. That is the truth. That's why I struggled.

Instead of sexually acting out in her adolescence, Kim began to wrestle with God and with her mother, who was absent when she was raped. She was angry at God who "allowed" her father to die of cancer, and who "allowed" "something so ugly like rape" to happen in her life. She began to question God's goodness and was not as sure of God's love as before, since "God allowed that kind of pain to continue" in her life. While struggling with God, Kim also began to fight with her mother, a church worker who was a representative of God on the one hand and of Korean culture on the other. She fought with her mother "for everything," since she "could not be angry with God who was not physical" and she could not fight with Korean culture which was too big. But her mother was a concrete figure associated with God and Korean culture. As she felt lost in the triple culture of Korea, America, and Christianity, Kim thought no one could understand what she went through as a "Korean-American sexually abused girl." Finally, in her senior year in high school, Kim left home because she could not get along with her mother.

While wrestling with her identity and sexuality, Kim began to read about sexual abuse, but she did not find what she needed. She became more knowledgeable but was not healed. Once after attending a lecture on youth problems and sexual abuse, she felt understood and was motivated to do something about her abuse experience. She met with the speakers and disclosed her problem in order to get some help. Kim "hated"

what she heard: "Go see a counselor." Kim knew that it meant to "seek a counselor who knows how to deal with it." But she knew she needed more: she needed a person who could relate to her as a person before dealing with her sexual abuse; resolving sexual abuse was only a secondary part of an authentic relationship with a person. Kim said,

And, the speakers spoke about sexual abuse and then I felt a special connection, you know. While in the audience, I thought like, gosh, she would understand my story. Then, I got up to her and I would say, you know, I need someone to talk, then received (a quick wave), "Go, go to a counselor." And then, the connection was broken, . . . "go to see a counselor." But, I didn't feel that connection with a counselor. You know, that means like, I don't know, it was like overt angry, what is your point? I knew that she was coming from a point, where, mmm, you need to seek a counselor who knows how to deal with it. I knew that, but that's not all I was looking for. I needed someone who, who understood me, whom I could relate to and say, you know, this happened.

Kim never sought professional help. This might indicate she was following her family rule of "tell not." Kim thought "it wasn't so much what they would think of me afterwards," but "it was always, my mom doesn't want me to tell, that was my fear." But it was also clear that the need for "connection" was the most important value for Kim. In her healing journey, the felt connections created a sense of being understood and well. One of the persons whom she felt connected to was her friend, Andrea, a survivor of sexual abuse, like herself: "who made me feel normal, whom I connected to." Then, a speaker freed Kim of her struggle from "Am I a virgin or not?" The speaker, a woman missionary, told Kim, "you may not be a virgin physically, but mentally and emotionally you are." Kim was "so thankful" for her telling her that. She also talked about this researcher who interviewed her; "I felt safe with you since you are like me, a survivor of sexual abuse." Finally, God stayed connected with her, even in the midst of her anger and resentment, and told her "I'm your father." She experienced God as the healer who could sap her emptiness and anger, on whom she could rely. It was clear that the

relational value of connection was the key to her healing experience. This value, the felt connection, played a role in the process of Kim's making the decision to share her testimony with high school students the year that she graduated from a college.

In college, Kim majored in Christian history and enjoyed a relatively calm existence as compared to her adolescence. For the first time since the loss of her father, she dealt with her faith in God. This experience led Kim to face her abuse experience, and she tried again to transform her trauma story into a testimony about God's goodness. She described this process,

I had a lot of anger towards God, because I couldn't make sense of how the God, who possesses much love, could allow me to go through that kind of pain. . . . One time I was at a meeting, and the group was singing gamsahae (감사해, Let's thank God). It's about being thankful with our situations. I just thought, why the hell do I have to be thankful? I couldn't think of anything in my life. I'd been raped. I don't have a father. I don't know who I am. I feel lonely. No one understands me. Everything, you know. I just complained, complained, complained, complained. And then, I just started crying. I couldn't, the hurt was too much, and I started to cry. God, God told me, "I'm your father." That, that was a relief for me. That was my turning point. That showed me that even with the rape, you know, that maybe happened so that he can get to be glorified. I could share with someone about my father and how God became my father. To me, that was healing. And, so, I thought like, this one too! If I could share what God implanted in my life, in spite of that ugly man, then, that would be healing in my life. That would be, OK, more than healing, more than thinking healing. I guess it was more like, it had to make sense because I could not make sense in any way, why something so ugly like rape should happen to me. But if God can be glorified, or someone can understand God's love and healing through my pain, it would be all worth that pain. If I can't share it, then it is uselessness. If it is uselessness, then it would be like pain without remedy, for me. . . . I told to a youth teacher that I wanted to share and then to mother. But, if I told to my mother and then to the teacher, I couldn't have shared the story. I was really scared.

The hardest thing for Kim was to get her mother's permission to share the story; her mother was "so against other people knowing" and "kept saying no." Kim appealed to her mother's faith in God's goodness; "If I don't get to share with someone and that someone wouldn't benefit from it, then it was for nothing. And if it was for nothing, I

thought, like, "God isn't good." Finally her mother agreed with her, but not without "harsh arguments." Her mother came to her and said that she found peace while praying about it. After getting her mother's permission, Kim endured the painful process of writing her story in terms of God's goodness. She had to remember, organize, and share the trauma. Kim agonized in the process, since she had to explain in Christian language what she could not make sense of in a common-sense terms: God let the rape happen in her life. She said:

I had to put it in words. It was no longer, you know, just in my mind but I was going to share. So I had to organize it. Organizing meant remembering, and remembering meant hurting. So a couple of times I cried, a couple of other times I just quit.

When she shared her testimony with 172 Korean-American high school students, she was shaking, but she made it.

Kim was ambivalent about the outcome of her testimony. She was proud of herself in terms of her faith in God, which she had taken seriously and put into action. But, she also thought of her testimony as "unwise." She was not sure of its benefit to the youth, since "not everyone was sexually abused" and "some of them could not understand" her. It seems that Kim experienced a shift in her focus after the testimony, a shift whereby her concern for the possible victim was overshadowed by her fear of being misunderstood by the rest of the group. Such a shift, however, was not without tension because she also affirmed the testimony: "It would have been tremendously wonderful for me if someone had spoken like that in my junior-high school days."

Kim's ambivalence might be related to the context in which her testimony took place, an evangelical revival meeting for youth. The kind of group in terms of age, gender, and size might have been a factor to make Kim suffer from her sense of

diminishing safety and her vulnerability. In addition to those environmental factors, Kim also suffered from an inability to claim God's voice against sexual abuse, which was lost in her primary concern for "God's glory." Without being open to God's grief and anger at the rape in her life, she was left more vulnerable than before. Kim flew to Korea soon after her testimony, possibly a reflection in part of her agony and ambivalent feelings.

For Kim, God is the primary source of her healing. She said: "My most, my biggest healing was from God. I wish I could say it was a person, but it wasn't." She articulated how her Korean background affected her relationship with God:

Because coming from Korean society, you are not able to talk much. I think Korean culture makes people keep secret, "Mal-hajima. Genuying nadumean upujinda" [in Korean, meaning Don't tell. Let it go away without being spoken]. There is no confrontation, nothing! And, because my mom told me not to be confronted nor confront someone, anybody at all, I didn't confront anyone. So the only person I could rely on is God.

In her healing journey, Kim made a heroic effort to overcome two major losses, her father and her virginity, and attempted to reconcile both through her faith in God. Her journey continued, centering on the issues of intimacy. She believed it was God who could make her whole, but she knew she needed more, someone to grow old with. She kept fighting back feelings of "not being whole" and suffering from a nagging sense of incompleteness without having somebody to connect to intimately.

Trust in the Self: Sook's Story

Sook was a small 31-year-old woman who embodied the survival wisdom of *minjung*, the oppressed, in Korean history. She was not affluent, but rich with humor, satire, and optimism in the midst of despair. When she talked, she followed a logic rooted in reality, not cultural and religious values, which gave her a sense of freedom and

confidence, even to the point of fighting with a neighbor and pulling her hair. Her eyes sparked when she smiled and were somewhat defiant when she was not sure or curious. Although she had no religion, she was amused to hear that she had a shaman identity when she sought a shaman's advice one time about her marital problems. She suffered from manic depression, a fact she discovered when she consulted a psychiatrist while staying in a shelter to escape being battered by her husband. She had only recently been married, though she and her husband had lived together for 8 years and had two daughters ages eight and four. She was a housewife, her husband a carpenter. As she related, her marital problems preoccupied her: her husband had had several affairs and Sook herself was distraught over her emotional affair with her husband's best friend. She repeatedly and emotionally referred to herself as "in searching" and "in making." This sense of self is what had survived incest with her father, several rapes, and an abusive marriage.

Sook grew up on a farm and her background included poverty, alcohol abuse, and violence. She described her childhood as "anxiety-provoking": she remembered, for instance, food splattered on the dining room table after fights between her father, her mother, and her father's mother. Conflicts between her mother and grandmother were intense and only ended when her father beat his wife for his mother. Sook described her father as impulsive, greedy, and violent, especially when he was drunk. Her mother was aggressive in her relationship with Sook's grandmother, but indifferent and neglectful toward her six children. When I met Sook at her home and listened to her story, I was struck with the continuity from her childhood, not only to Sook, but to her two children. Sook, like her mother, spent a great deal of energy surviving the arguments, beatings, and

destruction of property that her marital conflicts generated. Like Sook, her two children were exposed to these adult dramas, since there was no other place to go: the apartment had only one room in which the family slept, ate, and fought together. Sook was aware that she was at times "indifferent and careless" toward her children. She also emphasized that she was trying hard to be different since she did not want to be like her mother.

Sook was not sure when her father began to molest her sexually but guessed it might have been when she was in the fourth grade. That was the year she stopped playing with her father. It was difficult for her to recall in detail what happened:

I don't remember much, except that my father came to me at nights and I was so scared. When it started, how often, I don't remember. But I know my feelings, fear and disgust. I was so scared at nights. Especially when my mom was out, I was so frightened and numbed. And, he hit me when I didn't let him touch my body. Not sexual intercourse, but he touched my private parts. It's disgusting, . . . There was a sliding door, separating the children's room from my parents'. I remember my shaking whenever I was looking at the door and thinking, just thinking, about how it could be locked. One time I thought about a stick. With a stick, I thought, the door might be latched.

Sook knew that her father was "weird" but did not know how to stop him. She never told anyone about her father and her feelings of fear, anxiety, and disgust, which traumatized beyond the damage already inflicted by the incest. During her adolescence, she became increasingly "withdrawn" and "passive and mindless." Sook left home for work at age sixteen and decided to visit her family one year later. On the way home, she was raped by an acquaintance. When her father found out, he was furious both with the rapist and Sook. What is worse, the night her rapist was in jail, her father attempted to rape her. Sook managed to get away and never went home again.

The two incidents, rape by an acquaintance and her father's attempted rape,

shattered Sook's self already traumatized by her father's abuse of her as a child. Now, both her virginity and her relationship with her father were lost. During the subsequent four years, Sook just went through the motions of living. Although she worked at a factory during the day and studied at high school at night, she felt she had no purpose in her life. She was repeatedly raped and often let others take advantage of her sexually. She suffered from suicidal idealization and prostitute complexes.

When I was bewildered after the rape, I thought a lot about being a prostitute. I was relatively in control before the rape. Although my father sexually molested me, I was still a virgin. Virginity is a big thing for women, you know. The rape plus my father's ugly rape attempt was a finish blowing to me. The shock was fatal. And I didn't know why I tried to save myself physically and sexually. Since then, I slept around. And I was raped repeatedly. I think it was rape, because they forced me, and I didn't know what to do. And, I also began to attempt suicide which I never considered before. My first attempt at suicide was at age 18, soon after I was raped by my cousin, one year after the first rape. The second attempt came after I got an abortion at age 19. My life was getting messy and unbearable, and no one was there for me. I used gas for the suicide, and that really destroyed my health.

Sook fell into a state of depression at the age of 21. She suffered pain throughout her body and could not eat, drink, sleep, or work. She wanted both to kill herself and become a prostitute. She was "bewildered at the crossroads" of "killing herself," "being a prostitute," or "being psychotic and staying at hospital." Her "bewilderment" ended when she began to live with a man when she was 22. Her boyfriend came to terms with two of her issues: the incest and the abortion due to the rape in her past. However, when her boyfriend discovered her promiscuity in the past, two years after they began to live together, he was furious and became abusive. He beat Sook at first because of her "past," and then later, because she gave birth "only to daughters." Sook found herself again at a crossroads. Of that time she comments, "It's so hard to live then to die."

It was a TV program about sexual abuse that provided Sook with a perspective on

what had happened in her life. For the first time, at the age of 25, she realized that what her father did to her was incest.

Until that time, there was no name to my experience. I knew that what my father did to me was not good, something wrong and shameful, but that's all. I could not grasp what was what. When I watched the TV program, I said to myself, oh, my God, it is called incest. That's what happened to me. I became really serious and thought again and again about what happened to me. I realized that it was time to get help because I was also at a dead end in my relationship with my husband. Thus, I made up my mind to bet everything on counseling.

With support from a counseling center, Sook began to communicate with her two sisters, the oldest and the youngest of her six siblings. She was shocked to discover that they too had been sexually molested by her father and she was doubly traumatized when she learned that her mother knew about what her father had done to the girls. When Sook confronted her mother, the answer was equally heartbreaking, "Why is that [your body] so important?" Sook could not believe what she heard from her mother. In our interview she bitterly repeated her mother's words, "Why is that so important?" "Why do I make a big deal out of it?" She had not seen her mother since that confrontation. Sook was aware that many of her symptoms were related to the incest: her pattern of shutting down when faced with danger, revictimization, physical pain, difficulties in her sex life, and mood changes. Although she stopped seeing her father, she knew that something must be done about him. She called her older brother and told him about her father and about her medication for manic depression. Her older brother, shocked by his father's behavior, confronted him. Her father at first denied everything and threatened to kill Sook. But Sook's brother persisted, threatening to report him to the police. Later, when Sook called her parents, her mother answered and apologized for him. "We are sorry for that [the incest]."

The confrontation was a turning point in Sook's life. She experienced "real support" from the counseling center and from her older brother, something that had been absent in her life. With such support, she also for the first time felt understood, respected, and valued as a person. Her healing had little to do with her parents' apology. Rather, it came from experiencing and rediscovering others as caring and supportive. She was surprised to see others, including her husband, respond to her. They took her side against her father and gave her guidance and admiration for her confrontation with him. They touched her deeply and enabled her to tap into her personal resources; this allowed her to value herself as a person.

To be honest, I am still angry at my father. Sometimes I feel like broadcasting it on national TV, disclosing everything about him. But I can't. My brother-in-law doesn't know about my older sister. My younger sister has to be married sooner or later. And I have to take care of my in-laws. I wish, but I can't think about only myself. But, do you know what? It's the support I got. That's the real big thing for me. My brother, he trusted me, and really supported me by confronting my father for me. That's the first time I decided to live. I made up my mind to live, and to get through whatever might come to me. And I felt I could do it. I can do it. That's what I still believe. And that's how I changed through the confrontation. There were people who understood me. My brother, my two sisters, and my husband believed me, and the counseling center guided and backed me up. That's really something and gave me courage to live again.

After the confrontation with her father, Sook began to deal with her husband's abuse. She confronted her husband in terms of "three abuses": one was his battering "due to her past promiscuity," which was "nonsense in light of his own past promiscuity"; his blaming her for "only giving birth to daughters," which was simply due to "biological things that were beyond her control"; and his affairs, which she needed him to end. She succeeded in convincing him to stop the battering and blaming, and almost succeeded in convincing him to end his relationships with other women. What was unusual for Sook was not her ideals but her ability to act on her ideas regardless of what the culture said, a

point at which most Korean women have failed. Additionally, she combined her ideals with humor, satire, and realistic negotiations. For example, she did not hesitate to reveal her problems to others or listen to their opinions as she struggled to reach a decision. When faced with divorce, she talked with many people, and was determined to find a solution other than divorce. She invested all of her emotional energy in “educating” her husband about the “life or death” consequences of his beating her.

Sook criticized Christianity based on her life experiences. She did not accept the "male-oriented genealogical tree" of the Bible, nor did she accept "Jesus who came as a savior" from a male-dominant tradition. Since she was oppressed by Korean cultural values of son-preference and men's superiority over women, she didn't think Christianity would be helpful to her. She associated the omnipotent and omniscient God of Christianity with sexual abuse, in which she imagined God as a “peeping Tom” intruding into her private affairs.

They say, “God knows everything, sees everything, and is all powerful.” Along that line, nothing is hidden from the eyes of God, even your bowel movements and urination. How shameful! (laugh) God should not see those things!

The “peeping Tom” God of her imagination was parallel with her experience of her own father who "checked out" her vagina after she was first raped, in his role as an authority figure. Although in her mind, power and authority were synonyms for sexual abuse, she acknowledged her need of someone who can take care of her without sexualizing his/her power. "But when I was desperate, I called God for help. I don't know which god I called, but I just called God for help, not often but only out of desperation."

Sook associated suffering with learning and being strong. Whenever she went through suffering, she thought she learned a lot about herself, others and life itself. She

desired to learn something from suffering and tried hard to channel it in a constructive way. Even her father's "ugly behavior" taught her how to maintain boundaries. This was why she was agonizing about her emotional affair with her husband's friend. She was painfully aware that she would not be much different from her father if she could not keep emotional boundaries between friendship and intimacy. Her emotional affair with her husband's friend, in turn, helped her understand her husband's affairs. Sook was fighting with her husband to keep "one rule to live with" against double standards of sexual ethics but not without tolerance with negotiations and satires. Sook was sure that she would not attempt suicide anymore, since she had now survived so much suffering and gained so much confidence.

Sook had maintained contact with the counseling center for five years and acknowledged its significant influence on her life. She had individual sessions, made phone calls when needed, and communicated her feelings through keeping journals and sending them to her counselor. She trusted the counselors in the center "100 percent" and followed their guidance "100 percent." But she knew that it was not her counselors, but she who made the difference in her life, saying "However effective the teacher may be, it depends on the student to make it." She was proud of herself since she had not given up on herself. She had not killed herself, become a prostitute nor a psychotic. Instead, she was a mother of two children, a wife, and a survivor of incest. She was still suffering the effects of incest, no energy, physical pain, mood changes, as well as marital problems and difficulties caring for the children. She was strongly motivated, however, to overcome the many problems in her life. She was fascinated with her budding sense of self-esteem as she embarked on the huge task of personal growth: "No matter what others say about

me, I know I am important. Even my little nose, my husband made fun of, is good enough for me. I'm good enough. I will go further and see where life takes me." She was excited about a plan to publish her journal and hoped to make some connections with other survivors of sexual abuse.

Anger: Shim's Story

Shim, 54, was a small, quiet woman who had never married nor worked outside the home except for temporary volunteer work. Part of the reason for her unemployment was that she has aspired to be a writer since her college years. Though the dream had not yet been realized, she not yet given it up either. She lived alone in the countryside, where she planned to write her life story and make her home a retreat center for survivors of sexual abuse. I, as a survivor of sexual abuse, was her first guest and I had come to stay with her to enjoy the contemplative setting with its Catholic statuary and candles, and to listen to her life story. Shim presented her story in a reflective and open way, but not without difficulties at some points. She was a survivor of date rape, and her story was full of pain, anger, revenge, and hope.

She described her childhood and adolescence as unhappy. She, as the oldest of six children, was a victim of her paternal grandmother's tyranny and odd behavior. The older woman, who had been widowed at a young age and lived only for her only son, Shim's father, frequently referred disparagingly to other women: "She's crazy for men, what a whore," or "She's stupid, what a dumb girl," etc. Sometimes she apparently directed such remarks at Shim's mother. Shim thus learned early that her grandmother was the most chaste and smart woman in the world and that it was dirty and stupid to be inclined to any men. Her grandmother objected to education for girls and continuously harassed Shim

during her school years. Moreover, her grandmother did not allow Shim's family to sleep in a separate room. Thus the family of nine had to sleep together in one room, although they had several rooms they rented out, and endured the odd behavior of the grandmother: she often used a portable toilet in the room while naked. Shim bitterly recalled that no one said anything to her grandmother: "Every night we saw her ugly body but we pretended we didn't see anything. My parents were silent, my younger brother who was in junior high and I who was in high school were quiet, and my other younger sisters and brothers who were in elementary school were just as goddamn quiet. I hated and still hate all of those ugly things." Shim hated not only her grandmother who was abusive, but also her father who failed to protect the family from his abusive mother. Her hate intensified when she was raped by her boyfriend at the age of 25.

Shim was raped on a date by her boyfriend whom she had begun to see in her senior year in college. While dating him, Shim was haunted by her grandmother's words, "She's crazy about men, what a whore"; the words came to mind although her grandmother had passed away by that time. She stopped seeing him and then met him again by his force. After vacillating several times, Shim made up her mind not to see him any more since she was much concerned about what others thought of her and afraid of making any mistake before marriage. Her boyfriend suggested they meet one last time to say goodbye. When she met him, he raped her on a street near her neighborhood. Since "chastity was everything" for her, she was shocked and fell into depression. Shim had hope, however, because a part of her belief was that the rape was a kind of "love." It was her boyfriend's way of preventing her from breaking up with him since he badly wanted to marry her. When this belief turned out to be false, and she realized she had not only

been raped but abandoned, Shim was doubly traumatized.

Shim's parents found out about the rape because she could not overcome her depression. She could not eat and sleep, so her father met with her boyfriend to persuade him to marry her. But nothing made any difference; she only felt further cheated by his false promises. Eventually when it was clear that she was raped, abandoned, and humiliated, she attempted suicide several times and then became obsessed with the idea of "punishing" the abuser. Shim went to social and legal organizations for help and sent countless petitions to whomever might offer any help. She frequently returned to the traumatic event, her triple wound, that of the rape, abandonment, and humiliation. She kept records of her boyfriend's personal information and watched his family. Once, during our interviews, almost three decades after the rape, she described how the urge for revenge recurred when she heard about two murder incidents in which childhood rape victims killed their abusers.

I felt again that urge, really strongly, I mean, really strongly, almost out of control. So I bought a gas gun. If I can get him unaware, poison him with gas, and then hit him on the head with a hammer, who would not die? I was driven that way. It was so hard not to be. It was painful, I felt like killing myself instead of him. I lived that way, you know, with much pain.

It is clear that Shim suffered from post-traumatic stress symptoms, especially intrusive memories. At some point, she lost the distinction between justice and revenge. Or perhaps it would be fairer to say that Shim maintained the distinction with great effort, drawing the line at acting out her anger. With little perspective on her psychological symptoms, Shim experienced difficulty articulating her feelings. What was clear in her mind, however, was that there was no justice in society. She could not understand how an abuser could get away with violence which destroyed a person's life, and how there

could be no way to deal with such crime in society. Shim again faced the awkward silence of her family, like when her grandmother walked around naked in front of the children while everybody in the room pretended that he/she saw nothing and was just "goddamn quiet": When the rapist tramped her personal dignity and got away with it, the society kept deadly silence as if nothing had happened. Shim could not understand why this was so, and after three decades of wrestling with the problem she had become obsessed with it.

Shim never sought secular counseling. As a Catholic, however, she consulted with many priests about her abuse experience and had received pastoral care for many years. When Shim talked about her priests, her tone softened and her appreciation was evident. Shim was ambivalent, however, about the role of her faith in dealing with sexual abuse. She acknowledged that her faith sustained her in the midst of suffering and protected her from acting on her wish for revenge. She thought, on the other hand, there should be more than merely help to endure suffering. This ambivalence was expressed in her sharp conflict over a God who "allowed" her to be raped and burdened her life with such suffering. Shim believed that God could draw good out of evil, but agonizing doubts accompanied her faith.

If there were a God of love, how could it be possible that a woman's life is destroyed like this? It might be a cross to bear, but it's too cruel, and I simply didn't want it. I could not get rid of this argument with myself and with God. My priest said, no cross comes without the ability to bear it. But why me, why me among such fine and able countless women in the world? Even so, what's the result? No reward of bearing the cross for thirty years. I was betrayed again and again, you know, and I kept fighting against killing myself. Again, I thought I had to accept what happened and to draw out some hidden meaning. I might be chosen to work as a godmother for other women who were suffering through this unwanted suffering in my life. In a sense, God invited me to participate in Jesus' suffering. Although I followed that line of thinking, I came back again, why? Isn't that evil to destroy my life? Without evil, how come such suffering? . . . So, there

were two theories. It might have been God who allowed such pain in my life and made me bear a cross for some hidden but good purpose. And, it might have been an evil who gave me such a cross and destroyed me with the cross. This is why I had to struggle. When I protested, it was to God and to evil at the same time.

Shim strongly believed that the rape could not have happened without God's permission. Thus Shim agonized with God's two faces, one good and one evil. In spite of her agony, Shim trusted in her priest and felt accepted as she was. Her Catholic community was a primary source of coping with her pain: she relied on it and stayed connected for many years.

A turning point for Shim came at age 48 when she learned that there were other survivors of sexual abuse. The two murder cases, that had renewed her anger when they occurred in 1990 and also made society aware of such problems, helped Shim make sense of her own experience. She attended the trials and supported the two abuse victims with all her heart. This experience led to connections with other survivors, and the realization that she was not so strange. Her relationships with other survivors and her growing sense of acceptance gave her a courage to appear on national TV as a survivor of sexual abuse, at age 51. Shim's family was unhappy about her revealing such secrets on national TV and accused her of disloyalty to them. Shim, however, believed that her testimony had little to do with family loyalty but much to do with her healing process. Moreover, she had the conviction that it was not the victim but the victimizer who should be shamed.

Shim still suffered from intrusive memories. She also struggled with writing her life story since she could not yet come to terms with her behavior, especially, her obsession with revenge and her ambivalence toward intimacy. In spite of such problems, her experiences gave her a window to see Korean culture critically, leading her to women's study groups. She had been empowered to stand up for herself: "It is not me,

but the abuser and the culture which supports him, who should be shamed and judged as sinners." She hoped that for the remainder of her life she could work to help other survivors and by creating a supportive community for growth and healing.

Agony for Not Giving Up: Sung's Story

Sung was a 56-year-old woman with a beautiful smile. She was tall and attractive. She was a director of a mission center for prostitutes on an American military base and devoted her time and energy fully to the work, a labor of love that was characteristic of her life. She had been married for 30 years and had no children. Her husband was a professor in a theological seminary. Sung volunteered when I contacted the center for information about possible interviewees, saying "I might be available, although I'm not quite sure how I fit into your interview." Sung, who had been in the United States for 7 years during her husband's studies, was open and outgoing. As her story unfolded, two incidents emerged as most painful in her life; the loss of her mother when Sung was 12 and the absence of intimacy in her marriage which was full of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Sorrow and loneliness were dominant feelings in her story, which she endured through her faith in God.

Sung came from a middle class family in which music and faith in God were valued. She recalled her father, an engineer, as a person who loved sports, music and photography. Her mother, who loved to sing, was quiet, hard working, and self-sacrificing. When her mother died of tuberculosis, Sung's happy childhood ended at the age of 12. Her adolescence began with shock, pain, and overwhelming responsibilities as the oldest of three children. Sung had a conversion experience at age 17. Through the conversion experience, she resolved her anger at God and was able to forgive her mother

who abandoned her and her two younger brothers. She became a devoted Christian who took care of the whole family, including her step-mother and three step-siblings when her father later remarried. Although she graduated as an honor student in high school, she gave up her dream for a college education and chose to work. She went back to school at age 40 when she was at last free from supporting her brothers and her husband's studies. She became a social worker at age 44.

At age 24, Sung was engaged to a man by family arrangement. This engagement was soon canceled by Sung for two reasons: her fiancé was a womanizer, and he raped her. Two years later she met her husband-to-be at work and married him after a two-year relationship that included sex. Sung had let her future husband know about the rape as part of their sexual relationship to explain why she was not a virgin. She interpreted his silence as understanding her. But, her husband turned out to be emotionally and physically abusive even during their honeymoon. Within the first year of her marriage, she got TB and badly wanted a divorce. While recovering from TB, however, she made a recommitment to her marriage since she believed in God's goodness in the midst of bad things. Sung worked hard supporting her husband's studies and taking care of her in-laws while at the same time suffering beatings and other abuse from her husband. When she could not stand his abuse any more, especially when they were living in the United States, she thought about divorce again. The beatings got worse even as she worked hard as a housemaid to help her husband study full-time without working. Sung decided, however, to put more efforts into their relationship rather than to divorce him, since she had a strong conviction that God would never betray her trust and prayer.

When I met her, Sung had endured battering for thirty years in the hope that some

day her husband, now a pastor and professor, would change. That "some day" had not come. What is worse, their marital sex at times seemed more like rape than intercourse; he never cuddled with her, caressed her, nor talked intimately with her during her 30-year marriage. Sung craved even a little affection but did not dare to ask him for it. She lost sight in her left eye due to stress, and then had a hysterectomy. Her body, in a sense, was desecrated. Sung was painfully aware that she was never perceived by her husband as a woman who needed love and care, although such qualities were rich in his relationships with others. She was wondering whether her lost virginity essentially might have been the reason for her husband's physical and sexual abuse. If so, she said, "sexual abuse runs through my whole life."

Sung never told anyone about her marital problems, except for one of her very close friends, until age 47. She believed that she and her husband could handle the problem. She also had an undivided faith in God's hidden purpose for couples going through the very problems they suffered. When she encountered feminist theology and began to study about women's issues in her late forties, her eyes were opened to her situation and she began to talk about her marital problems in women's groups. Although she felt empowered by the group and was able to help others, nevertheless, she could not seem to change her own life when she came home from the study group. Her husband thought that, as a theologian, he knew better than she and that he was entitled to rule over her intellectually, physically, and emotionally. When she consulted with a pastoral counselor, who was her husband's friend, she got comfort and care but also the advice to make herself more sexy.

When we met, she thought that her husband was getting better: he did not force

her to have sex after beating her any more and he had only beaten her twice in the previous year. However, things had not changed with respect to the lack of intimacy in their sex life or in his abusive treatment of her in general. This failure saddened her.

I don't think we have made any improvement in the quality of our relationship. It is still foggy, still like we never took that first step. I never have that feeling we can meet, talk and know each other. No connection. We are still like strangers, unknown to each other, spiritually, emotionally, and sexually. That's why I feel so sad. Isn't it a sin not to talk to each other, not to relate to each other? That's the biggest sin, I think.

Sung was also aware that she was not yet able to integrate her split loyalties in her life: God, feminist study, and her marriage.

I struggled to hold the three but I can't yet. That's my home-work. Although I am comforted by God, I am beaten at home. Although I am put down and abused by my husband, I speak against abuse in women's group. I am sometimes confused and feel absurd. For whom do I speak? Look at your life, no change!

I sympathized with Sung's observations about herself. It was puzzling on the one hand and impressive on the other to see the different aspects in Sung's life: she was productive and persistent but also self-defeating. She acknowledged that if there were something fundamentally wrong in her marriage, God might be of little help. However, she had the strong conviction that there was some hidden purpose in God allowing her to marry such a husband, and that it was her mission to fulfill God's will even though it was not yet known to her.

Sung had worked with prostitutes for four years. When the job was first offered to her, she thought that God had trained her for that kind of work since she felt a strong connection with the suffering of prostitutes through her life experiences. "When I came to work in this mission center, I recalled the promise I made to God at age 17. I promised that I would live my life according to God's will. I now believe that this is the mission

which God gave me and I have been trained by God for this work. I know what suffering is, and I understand better about their situation than before. We are connected through suffering."

CHAPTER 4

Sufferings of Korean Female Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Their Needs for Healing

The impact of sexual abuse on victims is the area of sexual violence that is the least studied in Korea. In this chapter, I will focus on two questions to clarify the experiences of the survivors of sexual abuse: (1) What symptoms have they suffered? and (2) How has the Korean culture affected their experience of sexual abuse?

Psychological Trauma of Sexual Abuse

For survivors of sexual abuse, it is not easy to go back to their past and recapture memories of their sexual abuse. It is even harder to remember the emotions they felt during such violent encounters. Adult language, interpretations, and self-protective defenses deflect their attention from their actual experiences. However, survivors never really forget their feelings of terror when their bodies were assaulted. The four survivors of sexual abuse I met communicated this feeling of terror and helplessness. Even though we only met briefly, their descriptions revealed a variety and depth of emotions about their abuse experiences. I have here collected some of their statements, including some already related in the last chapter, in order to give a picture of sexual abuse as a human-induced trauma on the body that terrorizes the whole biopsychological system.

“I remember struggling, and just wanting him off. He stuffed my underwear into my throat so that I couldn't scream. I was struggling, upper body and lower body.”
(Kim)

“He hit me when I didn't let him touch my body. I was so scared to death at nights.”
(Sook)

“All of a sudden, I was grabbed from behind. I collapsed in a second with my neck being strangled by his hands. I felt I was dying.” (Shim)

“After being beaten, I was forced to have sex. It completely shattered me. I felt so

miserable, disgusted and angry.” (Sung)

Studies have shown that sexual abuse is not over when the abuse stops. Its impact outlives the event and affects all levels of a survivor's being: affective, cognitive, behavioral, relational, and spiritual.¹ It produces many conditions ranging from sleep disturbances to behavioral problems and personality disorders. The impact of sexual abuse varies in form and degree, but it is undergirded by certain psychological distress and pain. This fits into the criteria of post-traumatic stress disorder,² subsequently referred to as PTSD.

PTSD arises from a variety of traumas, whether one-time occurrences or repeated events, including war, disaster, crime, and accident. What ties such events together is the definition of what is traumatic. A traumatic event is that which "overwhelms the ordinary human adaptation to life" and which causes "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation."³ Since these responses are evoked from within the limits of human systems subjected to overwhelming forces, trauma researchers have shown that survivors of very different traumas share some of the response patterns and suffer from many similar acute and long-term consequences.⁴ The work of trauma researchers has led to the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms of PTSD vary but can be grouped into three main psychological distress patterns: hyperarousal, intrusion, and

¹ Jody M. Davies and Mary G. Frawley, Treating the Adult Survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse: A Psychoanalytic Perspective (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 27. See also Carrie Doehring, Internal Desecration: Traumatization and Representations of God (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993).

² Dolan, 3.

³ Herman, 33.

⁴ Davies and Frawley, 27.

constriction.⁵ I will examine these three main features of post-traumatic stress symptoms in conjunction with the stories of sexual abuse survivors whom I have interviewed.

Hyperarousal

By definition, trauma overwhelms. Thus, a traumatic event profoundly changes the level of ordinary response. A traumatized person startles easily, and does not respond with a "normal baseline" level of relaxed attention but with an "elevated baseline of arousal."⁶ This alarming response is a reaction to a past original traumatic event, but it "persists and is now maladaptive to a life of safety and security."⁷ Kim (23), a survivor of child rape, told of her alarming response when she was a teen.

I used to go to my friend's house a lot. We'd often watch movies together while watching her baby . One time, I fell asleep on the couch and her husband came in. He rubbed his face against mine, and I almost jumped out of my skin. He was shocked by my response because he was just messing around. His wife was my friend.

A touch to Kim's face made her jump. It was an emergency response of anxiety based on her original trauma in which she, as a 9-year-old, was raped by a stranger during the night while she was sleeping. Some individuals with PTSD become aware of changes in their response patterns, but others do not. With little awareness they repeat a variety of hyperarousal "fight or flight" responses. Startle reactions, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, nightmares, and psychosomatic complaints are evoked when exposed to unexpected sounds, touches, smells, voices, and interpersonal situations that remind the

⁵ Herman, 35. See also Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd ed., (Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1987), 247-50.

⁶ Herman, 36.

⁷ Ibid., 36.

subject of some feature of the traumatic event.⁸ These reactions vary in degree. Nevertheless, they can cause additional symptoms related to anxiety and thus impose considerable constrictions in their lives.

Constriction

In addition to hyperarousal symptoms, trauma researchers have observed a considerable constriction of affect, cognition, and behavior at the impact of traumatic events.⁹ When a person is completely powerless in a situation, and no form of action can change it, he or she is likely to survive by psychologically withdrawing. Such withdrawal may be experienced as "freezing," "numbing," "spacing out," "not allowing oneself to think," or partial or total amnesia. This alteration of consciousness is the key feature of constrictive symptoms.¹⁰

Constrictive or dissociative symptoms are initially reasonable in that they are efforts to "survive extreme psychological stress."¹¹ Without drawing on such dissociative abilities, many traumatized people could not have survived: psychotics may be those who were unable to develop adequate dissociative abilities at the time of trauma.¹² Many studies have shown that dissociative states were found in sexual abuse survivors. Although initially serving as self-defenses, alterations of consciousness are, by their nature, disengagements from one's immediate environment. This causes many disturbances in affect, perception, and memory, leading to "feelings of indifference, emotional detachment,

⁸ Dolan, 12-4.

⁹ Davies and Frawley, 31-3.

¹⁰ Herman, 42.

¹¹ Dolan, 5.

¹² Ibid., 12.

and profound passivity."¹³

Sook (30), a survivor of incest, had difficulty putting together memories of her childhood in an orderly way. When describing herself, she often used a Korean phrase, "nae-ahn-ae ga-chiup-dah" (내 안에 갇혀있다), whose literal meaning is "being locked within myself."

I didn't know whether or not I was locked within myself until I met my husband-to-be. I was 22 years old. He told me that I didn't get it even after being told ten times. I didn't listen. I didn't care, I was just gone! I heard him but I didn't understand. When someone would come to me and I didn't like him, I would just shut myself down. My two sisters, [who are also incest survivors], grew up in the same situation as me. But, they are not that much locked within themselves. To some degree, but not like me.

Sook was aware of shutting off her sensory and emotional responses and feeling somewhat different from others. She became numb when her father approached her at nights. So she shut herself down when approached by someone who might potentially upset her. The problem of "shutting down" when faced with danger is that it leads to another victimization. A survivor who shuts off her perceptions to escape an overwhelming situation is one whose body is left in danger. This is what happened to Sook in her late adolescent period. Sook did not think she was "promiscuous," for she was not crazy about sex, but she didn't feel any depth in her life and did not know what to do when someone wanted her. Sook remembered her late adolescent days and labeled some of her relationships with men as rape. However, she was little affected when sharing her story, thus communicating her emotional detachment and passivity during that period.

Alterations of consciousness vary in form and degree. They may be experienced in the form of "shutting down" and of partial memory disturbances as in the case of Sook. For others, it may be "out-of-body" experiences such as floating above one's body. For

¹³ Herman, 43.

yet others, there may be constriction in the ability to think about the future, make plans, or take initiative. This is a kind of freezing in which a survivor remains "inflexible, non-curious, unable to imagine freely, and too frightened to explore." Whatever the constriction of consciousness affords against these overwhelming emotional states, it exacts a high price, thus narrowing and depleting the quality of life and ultimately perpetuating the effects of the traumatic event.¹⁴

Intrusion

Again, by definition, trauma overwhelms. Thus, traumatic memories are different from ordinary ones. They are registered in the prior situation of helplessness and loss of control. This condition encodes trauma memories in selective memory storage.¹⁵ Due to their overwhelming and threatening quality, traumatic memories are encoded on a sensory motor level rather than on a symbolic, linguistic level. This gives a unique quality to traumatic memories. They are "unsymbolized, context-free encodings," "unavailable to linguistic retrieval."¹⁶ Thus they lack "verbal narrative and context"¹⁷ and, when triggered, they manifest in vivid images and bodily sensations or reenactment, rather than verbal, lineal, and reflective narrative modes.

In other words, traumatized people feel inhibited when consciously trying to remember the event on an emotional level. But, within a few seconds, they find themselves spontaneously reliving the event as if it were actually happening, as for

¹⁴ Herman, 47.

¹⁵ Davies and Frawley, 28.

¹⁶ Ibid., 28.

¹⁷ Herman, 38.

example, watching movies or when triggered by auditory, visual, or tactile stimuli.¹⁸ During flashbacks they experience feelings similar to those they experienced during the event, such as intense fear, helplessness, rage, and shame.¹⁹ Shim (54), a survivor of date rape, described feeling again a strong urge for revenge against her abuser when she read a newspaper article about a murder in which a childhood rape victim killed her abuser.

I felt again that urge, really strongly, I mean, really strongly, almost out of control. So, I bought a gas gun. If I suddenly get him, poison him with gas, and then hit him on the head with a hammer,

Shim re-experienced the full emotional force of rage towards her abuser when she read about the homicide of a childhood rape victim. It was 25 years later that she bought a gas gun and planned to kill her abuser, an ex-boyfriend who had three times traumatized her -- first by rape when she was breaking up with him and then by his abandonment and humiliation of her when she needed him. She was reliving the trauma as if it were actually happening and was ready to act on her feelings of betrayal, shame, and rage which had been immediately recalled in vivid detail. Even in recounting her emotions three years after the episode, the intensity and immediacy of her feelings were noticeable, especially the idea of getting back at her abuser.

What happens when such unwelcome experiences dominate a traumatized person's life? Shim is a victim of such repetitive intrusions. She repeatedly returned to the scene of the abuse whenever internal and external stimuli triggered the trauma. Consequently, she kept reliving the experience as if her life had stopped at that point. For example, she

¹⁸ Dolan, 14.

¹⁹ Ibid., 13.

was compelled to search for her abuser's house, to spy on his family, at one time to break into his home, to falsely report her marriage with him, to approach his child, and, as mentioned above, to buy a gun to kill him. Shim's case is complex with intrusive memories and reenactments of the trauma in which she seemed helpless and unable to put events into perspective. For others it might be ruminating for hours, flashbacks in the course of a few seconds, fragmentary sensations not yet clearly connected to a trauma experience,²⁰ and awakening from nightmares. Whether in the form of ruminations, intrusive memories, dreams or actions, reliving a traumatic experience is painful. It carries with it "the emotional intensity of the original event" and the survivor is "continually buffeted by terror and rage."²¹

A complicated feature of post-traumatic stress symptoms discussed above is that victims do not experience each group of symptoms separately but can oscillate among them.²² Immediately after a traumatic event, a traumatized person suffers more from intrusive memories combined with startle responses.²³ The survivor is in a highly agitated state and is, from time to time, flooded by intense and overwhelming memories. These hyperarousal and intrusive symptoms alternate with numbing states. The survivor swings between a "flood of intense, overwhelming feeling and arid states of no feeling at all; between irritable, impulsive action and complete inhibition of action."²⁴ These periodic alternations cause a sense of instability, and this deepens the traumatized

²⁰ Ibid., 13.

²¹ Herman, 42.

²² Ibid., 47.

²³ Ibid., 47.

²⁴ Ibid., 47.

person's helplessness.

In the course of time, intrusive symptoms may diminish, and constrictive symptoms come to predominate. Judith Hermann states: "The traumatized person may no longer seem frightened and may resume the outward forms of her previous life," but she may be "just going through the motions of living, as if she were observing the events of daily life from a great distance."²⁵ The constriction of one's inner life and outer range of activity is, by nature, a "negative" symptom, a lack of drama. Thus, constrictive symptoms are not readily recognized, and their origins in a traumatic event are often lost. Kim, a child rape survivor, who tended to respond by hyperarousal and flashbacks, was an intelligent, attractive 23- year old woman. But she viewed her life as "boring," and lacking drama. When asked, what if she were writing her autobiography, she replied:

Well, I don't want an autobiography. I think my autobiography is boring. [How boring?] I don't know. I like writing, but I don't think I am a creative writer. I think my autobiography would be, I don't know, maybe three pages. Page one, she was born. Hmm, you know, I can't consider myself a very positive person. I don't want to get negative, but, because it makes me sad. So, I find myself joking. Sometimes it is not good. But I joke around a lot.

Kim presented two sides of herself, neither of which felt authentic for her. One is bored and the other is joking around so as not to feel sad about her inner constricted self. Kim kept asking how to get rid of "that pain" which she knew was real inside, but from which she was unable to free herself. She was still suffering the impact of sexual abuse long after the actual event was past. As pastoral theologian James N. Poling says, sexual "abuse is not over when it is over."²⁶ It is not something that happens and is then forgotten. It may be over for the perpetrators but never for the victims. The survivors

²⁵ Ibid., 48.

²⁶ Poling, 94.

of sexual abuse whom I met still carried with them their experience of terror and helplessness on the most basic level of the human organism, that is, in their sensory and emotional patterns of response.

Subjective Experiences of Sexual Abuse: Trauma Contextualized

Despite the remarkable distresses of post-traumatic stress symptoms discussed above, the women interviewed said that such problems were not their primary concern.. Their symptoms were mentioned in passing and left as nameless features in the background of their stories. It is a little puzzling to see the gap between the survivors' response patterns, which seem to limit their lives considerably, and their sense of distress concerning them. While this will be addressed later, we may note at this point that the survivors' sense of psychological distress lies not in their physio-emotional symptoms but in their cognitive appraisal of themselves as women who were sexually abused. This addresses the issue of subjective meaning ascribed to sexual abuse and the role of culture as a basis for interpretation.

Self-Image

“I don't feel whole.” (Kim)

“I thought a lot about being a prostitute.” (Sook)

“I felt damaged and still find it hard to get beyond this sense of flaws in me.” (Shim)

“If his battering was somewhat related to my sexual history before marriage, then, I am wondering whether I am somehow responsible for his anger? And somehow deserve it? Hmm.” (Sung)

These are the utterances of the women I interviewed. What is salient in their experiences is the message that the psychological trauma of sexual abuse goes far beyond the physical effect on the human organism. The value-judgment of their being associated

with an experience of sexual abuse is a salient characteristic of their stories. They suffer more from what the experience of sexual abuse means to them than from the sexual abuse itself as an event. This is easily missed when employing the view of PTSD solely as a means of seeing the effect of sexual abuse. The psychological trauma of sexual abuse is distinguished from that of a natural disaster or human-induced crime in that it is predominantly dependent upon the subjective meanings given to sexual abuse by its survivors and the culture within which meaning is derived.

In this respect, culture, as the interpretive basis, comes into the picture and plays a critical role in shaping the survivors' subjective experience of sexual abuse. It is well known and studied in Korea that women's sexuality has been strictly controlled by sexual ethical codes of virginity before marriage and of fidelity after marriage. The following is a set of shoulds and should-nots with regard to female sexuality with which Korean women, in a traditional society, have lived in the strictest sense, even as recently as a century ago.²⁷ Korean women in contemporary society still struggle on emotional and attitudinal levels with these traditions.

1. You shall not lose your virginity before marriage.
You must die if you lose your virginity.
2. You shall not serve two husbands.
3. You shall not remarry after your husband dies.
4. You shall keep, at any cost, your fidelity to your husband.
5. You shall not be jealous of your husband's secondary wives.
6. You shall not defile yourself by being touched by any other man.

²⁷ Man-poong Kim, "Faithfulness, Guilt, and Shame in Women of the Yi Dynasty in Korea: With Contemporary Illustrations and Implications for Pastoral Care and Counseling in the Korean Church in the Republic of Korea," Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 1989, 176-78. In this study, Kim analyzed instructions for women in literature and stories of model women in traditional society, which he presented with 22 ethical codes for women.

7. You shall choose to die rather than to be defiled by any other man.
8. You shall keep away from men.

No one in contemporary society of Korea, regardless of gender, may admit to believing these seemingly archaic should and should-nots. However, the core message of these instructions, a double standard of sexual ethics, has many versions; it still operates as a powerful organizing force for intimate relationships between genders in modern Korean society. A woman who loses her virginity for whatever reason, might not commit suicide. Nevertheless, she may experience some form of social death²⁸ within the context of the supposition that a woman's dignity is measured solely by her virginity being intact. This is the experience of survivors of military sexual abuse, who were sexually exploited by Japanese military men during the Second World War, and who were then stigmatized and condemned by their social network when they returned to Korea.²⁹ They are the ones who have testified to the double victimization with which Korean female survivors of sexual abuse have lived and still do.

Like the survivors of military sexual abuse, the women interviewed shared a pervasive belief that they were unworthy, unlovable, and bad. They believed that it was their experience of sexual abuse which fundamentally changed their view of themselves. They felt stigmatized, damaged, or irreparably flawed. They also felt a kind of despair that things would never change and that they would have to bear the burden of concealment while being plagued with their pervasive sense of shame. While such a negative view of the self is found in all the women I interviewed, the two cases of

²⁸ Dhok-su Shon, "Women's Rights in Jeopardy: Sexual Violence" (in Korean), in Symposium: What is the Problem in Current Laws Related to Sexual Violation? (Seoul: Korean Women's Coalition, 1992), 1.

²⁹ See Sang-wha Lee, "A Study on Military Comfort Women's Experience."

childhood sexual abuse are more revealing in terms of the process, in which the impact of sexual abuse and that of culture interplay to form a negative view of the self.

In the case of Kim, who as a 9-year-old was raped by a stranger who broke into the house during the night while she fell asleep, horror was the dominant feeling. She didn't know what had happened except that it was something terrible. She felt fear, pain, and confusion when she discovered that she was bleeding in the aftermath of sexual abuse. She suffered trauma-related symptoms such as hypervigilance, emergency responses, flashbacks, and avoidance. In a sense, she experienced the impact of sexual abuse more within the structural level of her body rather than within an interpretive and cognitive level.

It was her developed ability to see others' perspectives, especially her culture's, while still in her adolescence that propelled her into a second shock. She saw herself through the eyes of Korean culture and realized that she had experienced sex relations, regardless of the situation, and had consequently lost her virginity. She also realized that it was not only her mother, but the whole of Korean culture, including the Christian sub-culture, in which "virginity is such a big thing to a woman," that warned her not to say anything for her own good. She then felt the real impact of the sexual abuse that had happened several years before and began to suffer feelings of inadequacy as a woman. While she may have had a negative sense of herself before the sexual abuse and/or other traumatic relations in her early life, it was her encounter with the cultural voice of female chastity that served to crystallize the earlier traumas, including that of sexual abuse, into such a pervasive belief that she was unlovable and bad.

It is worth noting that before her encounter with her culture she was a 'survivor' in

the literal sense, as if she had survived a horrible car accident. She was physically hurt but did not feel stigmatized and rejected. It was the male driver who had harmed her who was wrong and bad; she was free of value-judgment toward herself. However, once she put herself in a cultural context, she became a shameful, guilty woman who had failed to keep herself sexually intact. She was no longer a survivor but a sinner who had lost her virginity before marriage and who should now pay the price forever. She experienced the subjective meaning of sexual abuse when, in adolescence, she encountered her Korean culture. It was as soul-shattering to her as the horrible rape itself.

The case of Sook, the incest survivor, further sheds light on the role that the Korean culture has played in defining what "real" sexual abuse is. From the age of ten, Sook was sexually molested by her father until she left home at the age of 16. During that six year period she suffered intense fear and helplessness. She began to develop symptoms such as numbing herself, spacing out, depression, absent-mindedness, and sudden mood changes. She coped helplessly with the incest by changing her response systems when she was powerless to stop him. The impact of incest was clear on a sensory, emotional level and later in her behavior such as her pattern of revictimization. However, the incest itself carried little weight in her thinking since she knew that she was "still a virgin" in spite of being sexually molested by her father.

One year later, at the age of 17, after she had left home, she was raped by an acquaintance. This had a profound impact on her at the interpretive and cognitive level. She knew that something really critical had happened to her, because she realized that this time her virginity had been taken. She saw herself through the eyes of her culture and felt irreparably damaged. Long aligned with the cultural judgment, she began to act

out by sleeping around, "feeling like a whore," and attempting suicide when overwhelmed with difficult situations. Sleeping around and attempting suicide were two things she "never considered" before the rape. It was after the rape that she felt like "useless trash" and gave up on herself. It was her literal faith in the value of female virginity that dismissed the impact of the incest but etched in stone the effects of the rape in that her virginity was no longer intact. Thus, the loss of her virginity, which was the same as "real sexual abuse" in her mind, amalgamated all the traumas of her life into a pervasive belief that she was unworthy and bad.

These two cases show the process through which the impact of sexual abuse and of culture interplay to form a negative view of the self. In this interaction, survivors experienced themselves as bad, unworthy, and unlovable. They lost their voices as survivors; though they had literally survived horrible events, they came to believe that they were shameful and guilty women and thus acted according to the dominant cultural beliefs. In such a subjective experience as sexual abuse, they lost their sense of self, their future, their community, and almost everything positive in life. The survivors' encounter with Korean culture was one of the most devastating experiences in their lives, perhaps even worse than death itself, since the suffering had never ended.

In addition, it should be noted that in the interaction between the two, the impact of sexual abuse and culture, the process of filtering plays an important part. During this interaction, trauma symptoms at the structural level of the body tend to pass unrecognized while symptoms rooted in a cognitive and interpretive level tend to be upgraded to the most important problems. Behind this process of filtering, in which cognitive problems override sensory and emotional ones in the aftermath of sexual abuse, is the literal faith in

female chastity which functions as a force of crystallization.

In other words, it is the literal faith in female chastity among Korean cultural beliefs that plays a critical role in making the effects of sexual abuse, other than cognitive effects, less visible, less serious, and less worth dealing with. In this respect, it is understood that while Korean female survivors greatly suffer from a negative identity, which is recognized as "particularly Korean,"³⁰ they are little aware of other symptoms. It also explains why survivors are so silent in Korean society. In the eyes of survivors, the problem of negative self-image from which they suffer is too sensitive to deal with due to its strong association with sex, and the dominant cultural belief in female chastity. On the contrary, other problems in the psychological structure such as startle responses and intrusive memories are too trivial, too odd, and too fragmentary to put into perspective in the light of the dominant cultural value. As a result, the after-effects of sexual abuse that they suffer tend to be either sealed up or ruled out.

The survivors interviewed suffered from a variety of symptoms. They were more keenly aware of the effects that were understood by Korean culture while remaining relatively blind to those that were unappreciated. Thus, when examining these symptoms, it is essential to take into account the context and not dismiss them as solely cultural but rather to reach out and accurately understand the suffering experienced by sexual abuse survivors. Korean female survivors are much more vulnerable to suffering from unnamed symptoms even to the point of revictimization. In addition, they suffer greatly from their subjective experience of sexual abuse, an experience in which they lose their intrinsic value as a human being as well as their womanhood according to the

³⁰ Ming-sun Lee, 60.

dominant cultural belief in female chastity. The agony of subjective experiences, such as sexual abuse and the damage it inflicts in the sensory and emotional response patterns, creates pervasive difficulties in the area of intimacy found in the lives of survivors.

Intimacy

"I would just back off right before" (Kim)

"I was beaten [by my husband] due to my past relationships with men and then due to only giving birth to girls." (Sook)

"I dated some guys, but never to the point of commitment." (Shim)

"There's no connection. We are always alienated from each other." (Sung)

As in the case studies of survivors of military sexual abuse,³¹ the issue of intimacy is a focal point of anxiety for those I interviewed. None of them was in a satisfying, intimate relationship. All the women interviewed had pervasive difficulties in committing to or maintaining satisfying, intimate relationships. Two of the women who felt empty and isolated were single. The other two were married but their relationships turned out to be abusive. None experienced intimacy.

The dilemma that exists between isolation and revictimization, which the survivors experienced, can be put into three interrelated statements: (1) "I'm damaged," (2) "I'm unworthy of love," and (3) "I have two choices in life -- to be abused in intimate relationships or to be safe in my isolation." Both choices are unbearable and unlivable.

The first statement, "I'm damaged," is rooted in the survivors' negative appraisal of themselves as a result of their subjective experience of sexual abuse. The core of the survivors' subjective experience of sexual abuse was the experience of losing their voice

³¹ See Sang-wha Lee, "A Study on Military Comfort Women's Experience." See also True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women, ed. Keith Howard (London: Cassell, 1995).

within the larger cultural voice, which resulted in their acceptance of the false role that they were shameful and guilty women. And the organizing force of the experience was the notion of female chastity taken on absolute faith.

In this section we explore the remaining interrelated statements, which have their roots in the survivors' appraisal of the self in the context of relationships, (especially intimate ones with the opposite sex), and the results of such appraisals. It is important to note that the form of intimacy Korean female survivors experience is within the context of Korean culture. It is the kind of intimacy which Korean patriarchal culture has fostered, shaped, and justified. It is not a universal paradigm. Rather, it is particular to a male-centered form of intimacy. It is a one-sided intimacy in which there is little room for women's needs and rights. In this respect, male-centered intimacy is similar to sexual abuse in nature. Both are characterized by the negation of women's needs and rights. I argue that the core problem in intimacy faced by Korean female survivors lies in the encounter with the male-centered intimacy as a Korean patriarchal social construct which tends to prolong and worsen the impact of sexual abuse.

The following is a set of shoulds and should-nots with regard to a woman's way of being intimate in marital relations. These overlap in part with those of female sexuality, which come from traditional Korean culture.³²

1. You shall respect your husband according to propriety as you respect your father, since the husband is heaven of the wife.
2. You shall give your life for your husband.
3. You shall die with your husband.
4. You shall not be jealous of your husband's secondary wives.

³² Man-poong Kim, 176-78.

5. You shall not get angry with your husband even though he batters you in anger.
6. You shall tolerate your husband and shall not get angry with him even though he has one hundred concubines and no matter how much he loves them.
7. You shall keep, at any cost, your fidelity to your husband.
8. You shall choose to die rather than to be defiled by any other man.

Again, no one in contemporary society in Korea may admit that he or she believes these seemingly archaic mores. It is important, however, to remember that Korean women lived with these instructions in the strictest sense as recently as one century ago and women today still find themselves affected by them.

What is more important is the undergirding reality of the instructions – the power imbalance between genders and intimacy between unequals – which has not been changed regardless of the amount of time that has passed. Intimacy has been shaped, as shown in the above instructions, according to a power imbalance between genders. And, male-centered intimacy has been a major source of Korean women's suffering. It has been well studied as the subject of *han*.³³ It is worth noting that it is a one-sided intimacy because it is based solely on the male's needs. Korean women have suffered whenever they positioned themselves in relation to men's desires without regard for their own needs.

The problem that faces sexually abused Korean women is a double handicap -- first because of their gender in general terms and second because of their sexual abuse in particular. They are vulnerable to abuse in intimate relationships not only because they are women who are supposed to show their love by sacrifice; but also because they are

³³ Young-ae Kim, *Han: From Brokenness to Wholeness: A Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women's Han and a Contextualized Healing Methodology*, Ph.D. diss., Claremont School of Theology, 1991 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991). See also Young-hee Lee, "Traditional and Modern Korean Women's Literature: Ideology, Culture, and Han," Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai, 1993.

sexually abused women who are supposed to die for their chastity³⁴ rather than cheat in marriage. A woman who was sexually abused and later marries is one who may be at serious risk. She may be doubly victimized due to her sexual history as well as her gender. It is in this social aspect of the problem of intimacy that Korean female survivors are differentiated from those in Western countries.³⁵ Korean female survivors not only suffer the effects of sexual abuse but also social stigmatization through the institution of marriage³⁶ and its male-centered intimacy. This was the case of the incest survivor, Sook. She was beaten by her husband, first because of her sexual history, and then because she bore only girls. She was plagued by her husband's affairs with other women. She was abused in the marriage into which she had been seduced after eight years of living together. During that time she did "her best" in spite of her difficulties with sex and emotional problems, such as manic depression and somatic pains.

The following two cases may further reveal the survivors' dilemma between isolation and abuse, especially the dynamics, created by social and internal forces together. Kim (23), a child rape survivor, was more keenly attuned to the issue of intimacy due to her developmental need. She suffered from contradictory feelings regarding intimacy such as need and fear. She longed for intimacy with a male figure because that had been missing in her life since the age of three when her father died.

³⁴ Man-poong Kim, 176.

³⁵ It seems that Korean survivors suffer much from social stigmatization and condemnation which are roadblocks for their intimate relationships, while those in Western countries face difficulties in intimate relationships themselves. See Eliana Gil, *Outgrowing the Pain Together: A Book for Spouses and Partners of Adults Abused as Children* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992). See also Paul A. Hansen, *Survivors and Partners: Healing the Relationships of Sexual Abuse Survivors* (Longmont, Col.: Heron Hill Publishing, 1991).

³⁶ See Sang-wha Lee, "A Study on Military Comfort Women's Experience."

But she was also frightened by the idea of closeness to men, for she was simply unfamiliar with intimacy due to its absence in her life. She also had been raped at the age of nine. She was terrified by the rape, further traumatized by her cultural value of female chastity, and suffered much from her fear of it "being found out" that she was not a virgin during her adolescence. This fear was diluted by her growing assertiveness by the time she was interviewed. "If guys find out and they don't want to marry me, they are not worthy of me." In spite of her reasoning, she could not get rid of her deep-seated sense of unworthiness and felt that she was at "the peak of insecurity" in intimate relationships. She would "just back off" whenever she felt dangerously close to her boyfriends.

Her need for safety and her fear of abandonment were all in the way of intimacy. It made her feel that what she had longed for since childhood was unreachable. What alarmed her was her "settling for second best." Her fear of abandonment and her need for intimacy made her lower her standards and date men who were not her type, but who seemed easy-going enough not to abandon her. Arguing with herself that "I do deserve the best," she was yet painfully aware that she didn't actually feel that way. It is worth noting that Kim's inability to trust in herself and others was a product of both external and internal forces. She was continually buffeted by the terror of being "found out" which was rooted in the social beliefs of female chastity. At the same time, internal forces, such as anxiety responses that stemmed from the rape that she had experienced in her earlier life, frightened her. Kim was faced with a tough task because of her weakened ability to trust in herself and others. She had to find a way to be intimate without being trapped in isolation or abuse. When interviewed, Kim agonized over the dynamics. Another survivor in this study, Shim, had been trapped in isolation since her date rape,

when she had been the same age as Kim.

While Kim's case reveals the dynamics of the emotional turmoil that single survivors might experience, the case of Sung, 56, a date rape and marital abuse victim, shows another pitfall which survivors may experience in marriage. Sung, who barely related the dilemma of the survivor, turned out to be the worst case of the dilemma. The dilemma being: "I'm damaged; I'm unworthy of love, and I have two choices in life -- to be abused in intimate relationships or to be safe by isolating myself." She was somewhat concerned but did not suffer much when she broke up with her fiancé at the age 24. He had raped her and had affairs with other women. She moved on and started dating her husband-to-be. She let him know about her previous engagement and made the rape in her past no secret to him before their marriage. This revealed her basic trust to love and be loved. She was, in a sense, positive in relating to herself and her life. Additionally, she was attractive to her husband-to-be, and her husband-to-be, who was a seminary student at the time, was symbolic to Sung. She might otherwise have been seen as flawed because of her past -- her engagement and rape by her ex-fiancé -- from a Korean point of view.

The problem was that Sung's husband changed soon after marriage. She was no longer treated as a woman who needed care and respect. She was yelled at, beaten up, and pushed into sex without any affection from her husband. Divorce was not a choice because of her Christian faith. So, Sung pleaded and fought with her husband to make him stop his verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. But her efforts had been futile during her 30 years of marriage. Sung developed battered women's syndrome.³⁷ She felt "rather

³⁷ Lenore E. A. Walker, *Abused Women and Survivor Therapy* (Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association, 1994), 63-5. See also Joy M. K. Bussert, *Battered Women: From a Theology*

relieved" after being beaten and "tense and jumpy" while waiting for the next tornado to hit. Whenever heartbroken, she turned to God to deal with her suffering while her husband turned to alcohol. When drunk, her husband would say that he would kill himself someday, to which Sung's Christian sense responded with dismay.

It is important to note that Sung's sexual history never came to the surface as the focal point of her marital conflicts. Still, it was the underpinning of her complex marital and personal conflicts, as Sung had already assumed. On her husband's part, it was unfair to make an issue of his wife's sexual history which he knew prior to marriage. But, like many others, he could not free himself from his upbringing, cultural teachings, and his male-centered approach to intimacy, attitudes that he internalized as he matured into manhood. On Sung's part, her Christian faith, her learned helplessness, and her deep-seated sense of guilt over her past, were all in the way of her taking action to make a difference in her marriage. Sung reflected on the original trauma of sexual abuse and questioned her worthiness and lovability. This had been previously suppressed and was now activated with full emotional force through the abuse in her marriage. Sung was sexually abused before marriage and was repeatedly abused in her marriage because of her gender and her sexual history.

The cases mentioned above show the dilemma between isolation and revictimization in intimate relationships experienced by Korean female survivors of sexual abuse.³⁸ It is not isolation versus intimacy as posited by Erik Erikson,³⁹ but worse -- isolation versus

of *Suffering to an Ethic of Empowerment* (New York: Kutztown Publishing, 1986), 47.

³⁸ Sang-wha Lee, "A Study on Military Comfort Women's Experience."

³⁹ Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 70.

abuse -- that faces Korean female survivors in their young adult period. This is because of the existence of social forces that retraumatize survivors again and again when they enter intimate relationships. Social forces, ranging from blaming victims to the supreme value of female chastity to the social construct of male-centered intimacy, all contribute to the survivors' vulnerability to isolation and abuse in intimate relationships.

In addition, survivors are overwhelmed by internal forces when they enter intimate relationships. Intimacy tends to activate old traumas of sexual abuse not only because of its appearance but also because of its nature. A male-centered intimacy is similar to that of sexual abuse in terms of its heterosexuality and its dehumanization of the female partner in the Korean cultural context. Thus, internal forces, ranging from negative self images to a deep-seated sense of powerlessness to emotional and behavioral flashbacks rooted in original events of sexual abuse, all contribute to the survivors' difficulties in changing once involved in intimate relationships.⁴⁰ Due to these social and internal forces, Korean survivors are vulnerable to running into the roadblocks of isolation and abuse, both of which are powerful and tragic forms of revictimization of survivors.

As shown above, survivors who experienced themselves in a negative way also had pervasive difficulties in intimate relationships with others. These interrelated problems of self-image and intimacy, which are already an expression of alienation from the self, others, and the world, tend to be worsened when exposed to Korean society's silence at best and its stigmatization at worse.

Community

“No one handled me emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Nothing!

⁴⁰ Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan and Research Center, 268-69.

I had nothing!” (Kim)

“My life was getting messy and unbearable. No one was there for me.” (Sook)

“It’s futile, like throwing an egg against the wall.” (Shim)

“Even though I believe in God’s goodness, I feel restless and empty.” (Sung)

As heard in the statements above, the women interviewed felt that they were totally alone through most of their struggles because of the sexual abuse that occurred in their lives. None of them felt they had received care and support in a way that they were heard, validated, and restored unto themselves, their social network, and their spiritual well being. They felt uncared for, disconnected from society, and plagued with questions as to God’s purpose for their lives. And they had difficulties finding resources and support when they finally got beyond their initial agonies brought on by sexual abuse in their lives. The predicaments they experienced as sexual abuse survivors, let alone sexual violence itself, call into question the nature of Korean society and its ability to respond to those not just in crisis but in crisis coupled with social condemnation.

Korean society has never responded positively to sexually abused women. At the risk of over-simplifying, I identify four patterns of society’s response to sexually abused women in Korean history, especially since the Yi dynasty in the fourteenth century: martyr-honor, survivor-whore, survivor-stigma, and survivor-secrecy.

The first response between a sexually abused woman and society, martyr-honor, was the predominant one during the centuries dominated by Confucian ethics.⁴¹ Society honored women who died for their chastity, either by suicide or homicide. Women who

⁴¹ Confucianism was adopted at about the fourth century from China and became an ideological basis of socio-political structures during the past six centuries from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It has been a metaphysical basis for women’s subordination to men and the ideology of female chastity in Korea. See Ok-kyung Lee, “A Study on Formational Condition and Settlement Mechanism of Jeong Juel Ideology.”

were sexually abused could relate to society in a positive way only at the cost of their lives. Some of the most honored women in Korean history were actually those who were exposed to sexual abuse and died because of the dogma of chastity.⁴²

The second response, “survivor-whore,” is the negative counterpart of the first and was also predominant when Confucian ethics reigned. Society punished women who were sexually abused and decided not to die. By being treated as whores, such women had no choice but to relate to society in a negative way by, in fact, becoming whores. The term “whore,” in Korean, was transferred from the term, “a woman-coming-back-to-her-hometown,” whan-hyang-neo (還鄉女, 환향여).⁴³ A “woman-coming-back-to-her-hometown” is the name given those who were forcefully drafted to China to serve as maids or concubines and later returned home. Those women were part of the tribute paid to China over the centuries whenever the Yi dynasty lost its independence.⁴⁴ These women were victims, but judgmentally labeled as “returning bitches” and later “whores.” It is worth noting then that the term whore arose out of a context in which a certain moral judgment prevailed: it is the way the term whore was made: a “woman survivor” who came back to her home town (환향여) became a “bitch” who came back home as sexually defiled (환향년) and then a “whore” who was sexually shameless and sleeping around (화냥년).⁴⁵ In short, the Korean word “whore” was derived from the

⁴² Yong-dok Kim, 123-53. See also Committee in Commemoration of King Sejong, Three Important Values and Their Prototypes in Lives: Yolyo.

⁴³ Won-rim Byin, Women in Korean History (in Korean) (Seoul: Ilzisa, 1995), 19-21. See also Sook-gyong Choi and Hyun-gang Ha, The History of Korean Women: From the Ancient to Yi Dynasty (in Korean) (Seoul: Ewha Women's University Press, 1972), 182-90.

⁴⁴ When Korea was conquered by China in 1257, one item of tribute paid to China was Korean girls aged 13-16, which began with the request of ten hundred Korean girls in 1274 and continued until the seventeenth century. See Choi and Ha, 202-03, and Byin, 19-21.

⁴⁵ Byin, 19-21. See also Choi and Ha, 182-90.

term for a “returning survivor.” Hence, it refers to a “survivor-whore.” Sexually abused women had the choice not to die for chastity but nevertheless had to pay a price, since society punished them as “survivor-whores,” thus cementing the meaning of the term whore.

The third response, “survivor-stigma,” is similar to that of “survivor-whore” but its impact is milder in contemporary society in Korea. Society stigmatizes women who were sexually abused as damaged goods within the legacy of the tradition mentioned above and through the institution of marriage and its male-centered intimacy. Sexually abused women are not expected to die for their chastity or become prostitutes. But they often suffer from the dilemma of having to choose isolation or abuse as discussed in the above sections. In addition, they have to pay the cost of being a survivor, that is, a life of secrecy. The survivors of military sexual abuse fall into this category in that they coped with social stigma for over half a century by anonymity, while suffering intimacy problems in their private lives.⁴⁶ The women interviewed in this study also lived with this model but wanted to go beyond it and yearned for alternatives.

What if a sexually abused woman is a family member, a relative, a friend, or a church member? The last response, “survivor-secrecy,” is how a sexually abused woman is treated by those who care for her. Unlike society or other non-intimate parties, significant others in the lives of sexually abused women tend to respond to their loved ones' tragedy with sympathy⁴⁷ rather than stigma. Significant others of sexually abused women more or less identify with their loved ones and assume their stance of secrecy in

⁴⁶ See Korean Council, Testimony 1: Korean Women Drafted for Military Service by Japan.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 209, 267.

relation to society. The more they identify with their loved ones' suffering, the more they tend to advise them to keep what happened a secret and to get on with their lives. Sexually abused women who do not choose suicide, prostitution or anonymity but, instead, healing, tend to respond to their loved ones' advice with a sense of shame that goes to the core of their very being. This will be illustrated later with the life experiences of the women interviewed.

It is important to see the plight of sexually abused women as historical and social. Their sufferings are common throughout Korean history and arise as a result of their interactions with society. The bottom line of their predicament is society's inability to label sexual abuse as the underpinning of its own frame of reference. It is obvious that in the four responses mentioned above, the view that sexual abuse is violence is categorically missing and the view of women as something more than their sexual chastity is structurally absent. Male-centered intimacy, as shown above, is the natural consequence of culturally defined male sexuality. It is hardly capable, on its own, of reflecting on sexual abuse. And culturally defined female sexuality is hardly compatible with any idea of human rights other than female chastity. To name sexual abuse in such a way that victims of sexual abuse could hear it comes dangerously close to challenging the privileges men enjoy in Korean patriarchal society. Society and significant others of sexually abused women all tend to stop at this critical point in naming sexual abuse. Alternative responses such as "survivor-healing" or "survivor-thriver" based on survivors' human rights are not yet available in the minds of the majority of Koreans.

The women interviewed were more or less taken care of by two primary communities to which they belonged: their current or original families and their religious

communities. Except for the incest survivor who was strongly supported by a crisis center, all the women belonged to religious communities and used religious resources as well as their family relations. Two cases may be used to illustrate why family and religious support failed to help survivors of sexual abuse, even with the best of intentions for their well-being. The following cases fall into the category of “survivor-secrecy” or its religious version, “survivor-endurance.” This is the most benign of the four inter-actions mentioned above but nonetheless carries with it society's inability to name and challenge sexual abuse as a crime.

Let us turn to Kim (23), who was under the care of her mother when she was raped during her childhood. Her mother, who was a devout Christian, lived for her two children after the loss of her husband. She was shocked by what happened to her beloved nine-year-old. The rape was particularly horrible. A stranger had broken into their house while Kim's mother was working at church. Kim's mother probably suffered more than anyone else in the family except for Kim because of the rape. Kim's mother took care of her physical recovery and then told Kim never to tell anybody about what had happened to her.

Kim knew of her mother's concern for her and her mother's policy of “tell-not,” especially when she became an adolescent. But she also felt shame because of the way her mother responded to the rape. Her mother dealt with the rape with secrecy and helplessness rather than anger and taking action. Kim did not see her mother standing up for her. She did not report it to the police, take her to the hospital, seek counseling, or create an atmosphere in which the family might share their feelings about what had happened. Instead, Kim's mother decided to hush up the rape as a family secret for Kim's

own good, which thereby sealed Kim's sense of having something wrong with herself at a much deeper level.

It is important to see that, in Kim's case, the rape was not named and challenged as a crime in such a way that Kim could understand it. Neither was its impact on Kim taken seriously so that she could, in turn, learn to take seriously her need for healing. The only thing that was dealt with by the family's decision to "tell-not" was the family's unsuitability for coping with the victim's rights and her need for healing and action. Kim's case is only one, but it mirrors how many Korean families deal with sexual abuse when it happens to their loved ones. The silence from all sides of society, as shown in studies on sexual abuse in previous chapters, is evidence that sexual abuse has been dealt with by silencing the victim. This is the very dynamic of "survivor-secrecy" interaction.

In a religious context, the "survivor-secrecy" response persists in its dynamics in the form of the "survivor-endurance" response. Sung (56), a date rape and marital abuse victim, was comforted by a colleague of her husband, a seminary pastoral counselor and a long-time family friend. Sung was heard, understood, and cared for in a safe environment whenever she needed counseling. It helped sustain her through her husband's chronic violence. But the on-going violence in Sung's life was never challenged in such a way that the couple had to do something about the problem nor was Sung referred to other professional caregivers because of their dual relationships. Rather it was hinted at and indirectly suggested over the years that Sung had to know better and adjust more to her husband in order to reduce his violence.

Once again, it is important to note that the violence was not named and challenged in such a way that Sung could stand up for herself. Her husband should have taken

responsibility for his anger, whatever its causes. Neither was the impact of violence on Sung taken seriously so that she could learn to take into account her own well being. Again, what was mainly dealt with in her care was society's inability, in general, and the individual counselor's unwillingness, in particular, to confront violence. The counselor's failure to confront violence meant that the victim had to become more sophisticated in her ways of dealing with her husband. This is exactly what has been taught in male-centered intimacy in Korean patriarchal culture regardless of its sophistication. In addition, Sung's Christian faith did not allow her to claim God's anger along with her own at the violence but rather it taught her to endure the violence and excuse her husband. Sung's case is an example of how religious caregivers deal with sexual abuse or wife battering when it happens to their church members. Their good intentions for the victims' well-being often end up contributing to the victims' acceptance of violence and endurance of unnecessary suffering. This is the very dynamics of the 'survivor-endurance' response.

The two cases above show the plight of sexual abuse survivors through the response set of "survivor-secrecy/endurance." Korean society has not yet developed a humane attitude toward survivors of sexual abuse. It is a double burden for the victims. They have suffered the effects of sexual abuse in their lives and also fought what society projected on them due to its inability to name sexual violence for what it is. The women interviewed were struggling to find some person or community that could see through their eyes and create a basis for a different kind of caring for them. They were searching for a community in which their experience of sexual abuse would not be used as evidence against them but as evidence for injustice in society and their need for healing.

Spirituality

I remember each of the women who shared their stories. I also remember each of the stories, filled with pain, sorrow, anger, hope and challenges. It was awesome to witness their struggles for life. I asked myself why: What is it that gives their stories a sense of spirituality? A quality of sacredness was present in their struggles and hopes; to go beyond what they have been restricted by Korean culture; to transform their trauma; to search for a new identity; and to have hopes again for the self, others, and God.

I opened for the first time to spirituality in the dimension of the struggle of the survivors. They struggled to transcend what the trauma shattered in their lives: it is spiritual. They did struggle in the hope to reconstruct what the trauma destroyed: it is also spiritual. To be self-transcending is not more about being independent of whatever, but about being relational, more fully relational as before, living fully in relations with the self, others, and God.

Therefore, I use the term spirituality to refer to the actualization of the human capacity of being self-transcending, and thereby being relational, and spiritual as well.⁴⁸ In this respect, sexual abuse is critically related to the issue of spirituality, since it limits, even destroys, human capacities of being relational, and thereby restricts every dimension of human life. Spirituality is revealed, thus, when sexual abuse survivors suffer from alienation and disconnection from the self, others, communities, and God: It is also revealed through their struggles and hopes for being fully relational by transcending their abuse experience. In this section, I focus on only two issues found in the stories of the

⁴⁸ Joann W. Conn, "Women's Spirituality: Restriction and Reconstruction," in Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development, ed. Joann W. Conn, 9.

women in the study: the impact of sexual abuse on their faith in God, and their struggle to transform tragedy with the use of religious resources.

As sexual abuse destroys a person's positive sense of herself, it also severely tests her faith in God. Sexual abuse can shatter a person's beliefs: belief in a universal order where every person has a place and lives in dignity; belief in guidance by divine care and purpose in one's life. Sexual abuse threatens these beliefs as nominal or nonsensical. Also, the neglect and condemnation following sexual abuse confirm what sexual abuse has already connoted, that is, one's life and body are expendable. Two of the four women interviewed experienced meaninglessness in their lives to the point of attempting suicide, which indicated their loss of faith in God as well as hope for the future. Three of the women, who were Christians, expressed their feelings of acute anger, confusion, and absurdity. Following are the experiences of the women interviewed. They are poignant when heard against the background of silence of the Korean church community, a silence that is deafening when a Korean pastor can say, "We do not have this problem."⁴⁹

"I had a lot of anger toward God, because I couldn't make sense of how God who possesses so much love could allow me to go through that kind of pain." (Kim)

"If there was a God of love, how could it be possible that a woman's life is destroyed like this?" (Shim)

"It is hard to put together in a meaningful way what I have experienced with God and what I have endured at home. I am still beaten at home regardless of all my efforts to make it. I am sometimes confused and feel absurd. Look at your life, no change!" (Sung)

"They [Christians] say, God knows everything, sees everything, and is all powerful. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God, even your bowel movements and urination." (Sook)

⁴⁹ Marie M. Fortune, "A Disclosure in Seoul," Working Together 12, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 4-5.

As heard from the women interviewed, sexual abuse not only calls into question God's power, but also God's love. They experienced God as unloving, indifferent, absent, and abusive in the times of despair and doubt following sexual abuse. The women expressed several responses to God: God was unloving, for sexual abuse was allowed to happen and the innocent suffered; God was absent, because, otherwise, the life-destroying made no sense; God was indifferent since no one responded to the victim who cried out for help; and, God was abusive in that God's all-seeing, all-powerful nature overwhelmed human beings the same way that the survivor's father frightened her by invading her privacy. Pastoral psychologist Carrie Doehring has studied the negative correlation between severe childhood violence and loving representations of God.⁵⁰ She found that severity of violence is a significant factor contributing to the formation of negative images of God as "absent" and "wrathful." As traumatization increases, loving representations of God decrease, thereby substituting impressions of God as wrathful and absent.⁵¹ Although it is beyond the scope of this study to ascertain whether or not a woman's negative pictures of God are rooted in her personality or because of temporary reactions to crisis, it is clear that they suffered negative feelings and thoughts about God as a result of sexual abuse.

The finding that survivors of sexual abuse might suffer from a lack of positive images of God raises the question as to how traditional notions of sin, non-belief, and rebellion against God relate to sexual abuse survivors. For example, such a plight might be accentuated by the notion of sin in terms of the reversal of cause and effect. When survivors suffer the after-effects of sexual abuse in relation to God, they may judge

⁵⁰ Carrie Doehring, *Internal Desecration: Traumatization and Representations of God* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1993), 1, 130.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

themselves, or be judged by others, as failing to believe in God, thereby revealing their pervasive state of sin. It might be a double burden for Christian survivors of sexual abuse in that their suffering is not only unrecognized and uncared for, but is also judged as a result of their state of sin. This is compounded by the fact that the church, by not taking action concerning the problem of sexual abuse, is what caused their negative views of God in the first place. As noted by Doehring,⁵² the absence of caring whether it is the victim's familial response or church communities' has a negative impact on the victim's images of God. Korean Christian survivors, who have suffered from cultural beliefs and social institutions, find little difference in their situation within the Korean church community.

It is worth noting that the Korean Protestant church, which first appeared in Korea at the end of the 19th century, made a major contribution to opening the door to women's education.⁵³ Nevertheless, the church has perpetrated Confucian, patriarchal morals and family systems through its own patriarchal systems.⁵⁴ Exclusively masculine images of God, the male incarnation of God as the man Jesus, and scriptural references that base the wife-husband relationship on the Christ-church relationship all tend to confirm traditional Korean values. As with Korean Confucianism, the male is the head of the household,⁵⁵

⁵² Carrie Doehring, "The Absent God: When Neglect Follows Sexual Violence," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 47 (1993): 3-12.

⁵³ Woo-Jong Lee, *The 100 Years History of Women in the Korean Protestant Church* (in Korean) (Seoul: Minjungsa, 1985), 34-6, 112-40.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 32, 36. See Hyun-sook Lee, "Christianity and Sexual Violence," and Hee-soon Kwon, "Battered Women and Biblical Interpretations," in *Sexual Violence and Christianity* (in Korean), ed. Korean Association of Women Theologians (Seoul: Feminist Theology Co., 1995), 41-51, 52-75.

⁵⁵ See Martina Deucher, "The Tradition: Women during the Yi Dynasty," in *Virtues in Conflict*, ed. Sandra Mattielli (Seoul: Republic of Korea, 1977), 1-48.

lineage is traced through the son, and the wife is subordinate to the husband. Korean Christian survivors of sexual abuse might actually be worse off than other Korean survivors, for they now hear patriarchal, Confucian, and literalized Christian values,⁵⁶ and are taught to confess their sins before God rather than blame someone else.⁵⁷ This situation is oppressive to Korean survivors unless they succeed in transforming cultural and religious resources and claim them for their own well being and dignity. The issue of the relevance of the traditional understanding of sin to sexual abuse survivors will be discussed in Chapter 6.

While the women interviewed suffered from the pain of abuse, which, at times, turned to anger toward God, they continued to choose to live and struggled to find ways to transform their suffering. In an effort to channel their suffering in a meaningful way, they turned to faith resources and became theologians to articulate the beliefs they once held, which sexual abuse had destroyed.⁵⁸ Judith L. Herman states, “Survivors of atrocity of every age and every culture come to a point in their testimony where all questions are reduced to one, spoken more in bewilderment than in outrage: Why? The answer is beyond human understanding. Beyond this unfathomable question, the survivor confronts another, equally incomprehensible question: Why me?”⁵⁹ Classic

⁵⁶ One of characteristics of the Korean Protestant church is literalist understanding of the Bible and its verbal inspiration, which is accepted by the majority of Korean Christians: 84.9% of the 787 pastors and 92.3% of the 1991 lay people. See Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, The Centenary Anniversary Survey of the Protestant Church in Korea (in Korean) (Seoul: Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, 1982), 55-6.

⁵⁷ Sin and forgiveness are the most dominant themes found in sermons of Korean pastors. See Jung-ki Kim et al., A Study of the Growth of the Korean Protestant Church and Its Characteristics (in Korean) (Seoul: Institute for the Study of Korean Society, 1982), 133-35.

⁵⁸ Herman, 178.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 178.

questions of "why suffering?" and "why me?" confronted most women in this study, but especially Shim and Kim. Their cases may reveal the plight of Korean Christian survivors of sexual abuse in terms of faith resources. These fall short of their need for transformation as long as women's intellectual voices are absent and the church in general is silent about abuse.

Shim, a date rape survivor and a Catholic, was torn with questions of "why rape?" and "why me?" She tried to resolve these questions by finding meaning in her suffering. She said, "I had to accept what had happened and draw out some hidden meaning. I might be chosen to work as a godmother for other women who were suffering. In a sense, God invited me to participate in Jesus' suffering." Although she followed this line of thinking, she kept coming back to "why?" and "what's the result?" She cried out in agony, "Isn't it evil to destroy my life? Without evil, how come such suffering?" She painfully oscillated between two totally different sources of suffering. On the one hand, she thought that God may have allowed such pain in her life and made her bear a cross for some hidden, good purpose. On the other hand, she thought that an evil force had given her this cross and then destroyed her with it. She came to see that it was God and evil at the same time. Further, her awareness of evil as a cause of suffering empowered her to tell the truth about her abuse on national TV as well as in women's groups. She was convinced that it was not her, but "the abuser and the culture that supports him," that should be "shamed and judged as sinners."

Shim saw the value in the traditional understanding of Jesus' suffering in that it provided a context in which she was mirrored by His suffering and comforted by what was promised at the end. The years she had lived and struggled were testimony against

the idea that her suffering carried a "hidden but good purpose." There was no reward for bearing the cross for thirty years!

In addition, she came to see an inadequacy in the traditional understanding of Jesus' suffering. It failed to name the cause of her suffering. It was unable to empower her to tell the truth about the reality of this evil power. With her theory of suffering as evil, she could direct her anger at both the rape and its resultant suffering, and could thereby take action against them through her testimony. But she was not entirely comfortable about her theory since it was the opposite of the church's teachings on suffering as being something spiritual and leading to salvation, even through pain. She was torn between her own experience and what the church taught. She had no peace.

Although Shim was not explicit, her struggle with her suffering raised a poignant question about the cross of Jesus itself. The question is: Did God plan the cross of Jesus and make him bear it and die for some hidden purpose? Or, is it evil that was the cause of the tragedy that destroyed him on the cross, and did God suffer with Jesus? In a sense, Shim's two theories about suffering show the tension between traditional notions of suffering and feminist reinterpretations of them. This too, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Kim, like Shim, a child rape survivor, struggled with the questions, why rape? and why me? She could not make sense of what had happened to her. She agonized with such questions as: Why should something so ugly as rape happen to me and how could God, who is Love itself, allow me to go through that kind of pain? She was in turmoil. However, Kim had previously been able to overcome the loss of her father in the context of her faith. She found God taking the place of her natural father as her own, real, divine father. Through this experience she became a hopeful, determined Christian, testifying to

God's love. Her testimony was that God became her father, filling her emptiness and healing the grief she felt over the loss of her parent. She remembered this transformation, especially the healing power of testimony, when she was faced with the senselessness of her pain following her rape. She followed the lesson learned through faith; "Why can I not do the same with my rape? If all my pain and suffering were to be used for some good, thereby glorifying God, then it would be worth it." Her heroic effort to draw good from evil, to make use of the senseless pain of her rape to help others, helped Kim decide to share her traumatic story with a large group of Korean-American high school students. While she was truthful and heroic in acting on faith, she later felt "unwise" about the testimony she prepared and gave with all her heart.

The question is raised: What is the difference between the testimony about the loss of her father and the testimony about her sexual abuse? How did one turn out to be successful enough to empower Kim to be a hopeful, determined Christian, while the other hampered her ability to become a Christian survivor of sexual abuse? Even though many possible reasons were mentioned in Chapter 3, it is clear that sexual abuse is not yet a subject appreciated by the church. The church is uncomfortable with sexual abuse survivors in that it fails to address the agonizing spiritual questions that are raised about God and God's action. In addition, a focus on God's glory, when divorced from God's justice, is not adequate. This was the faith context which Kim's testimony was given. Such a focus on glory cannot empower women to claim the faith necessary to respond to sexual violence and suffering. Responses of the church community to suffering women need to honor their struggles, as well as their hopes; we need to recognize the presence of God in both.

In summary, the impact of sexual abuse on women is not a well studied subject in Korea. Thus, Korean female survivors have suffered a variety of symptoms of sexual abuse. Their psychological distresses are similar to those of PTSD, but more complicated because of the impact of Korean culture. The survivors' sense of psychological distress lies not in their physio-emotional symptoms, but in their cognitive appraisal of themselves as women who were sexually abused: A negative identity recognized as "particularly Korean." The women interviewed share a pervasive belief that they were unworthy, unlovable, and bad, according to the cultural value of female chastity; they were not aware of other symptoms. In this respect, Korean female survivors seem much more vulnerable to suffering from unnamed symptoms even to the point of revictimization, as well as they greatly suffer from their negative identity.

The issue of intimacy is a focal point of anxiety for the survivors of sexual abuse. Since it has been dominantly male-centered in Korea, intimacy is where female survivors are handicapped by their gender, their sexual abuse, and their negative identity: All contribute the survivors' vulnerability to revictimization, trapping them in the dilemma between isolation and abuse in intimate relationships. Another dimension of the survivors' suffering is related to the inability of society to listen to and validate their struggles for healing. I identified four ways in which society has related to sexually abused women in Korean history: martyr-honor, survivor-whore, survivor-stigma, and survivor-secrecy. The four responses identified reveal Korean society's inability to name and challenge sexual abuse as a crime. Thus, Korean society puts a double burden onto the survivors: survivors have suffered the effects of sexual abuse in their lives and also

fought what society projected on them due to its inability to name sexual abuse for what it is.

Although sexual abuse severely tested their faith in God or meaning in life, the women interviewed didn't stop searching for healing and growth. This is the spirituality in the dimension of their struggles. Spirituality is not more about God as Spirit, which is opposite to the matter, but about a transforming force felt in their lives, especially when they struggled to transcend what Korean culture projected to them due to its inability to name sexual abuse. Therefore, spirituality emerged when survivors struggled for life; when they recognized the presence of God in their struggles and hopes; and when, coming out as survivors, they claim and transform existing resources for the well-being of others as well as themselves.

Although such a contextualized spirituality might be present in many ways in the lives of the survivors, it can be seen, in par, in the process of the women's speaking out, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

The Power of Telling the Truth and Its Implications for Survivors of Sexual Abuse

The transition from silence to speaking out is the main theme in this study of Korean survivors of sexual abuse.¹ In this chapter, I first examine the women's experience of breaking the silence and speaking out. Then, I explore the implications of telling the truth for sexual abuse survivors from three perspectives: object relations theory, women's epistemological development, and women's group dynamics.

Power to Name and Give Expression to One's Experience

One aspect of the after-effects of sexual abuse is secrecy. Studies show many sexual abuse victims tend to keep their experiences of sexual abuse to themselves.² For an abused child, secrecy may be an effort to accommodate the situation in which he or she is afraid to tell because of the fear or actual threat of retaliation by the abuser, or because of anticipated or actual disbelief by other adults.³ In a similar way, secrecy is a compelling reality for adults who were sexually abused in their adulthood or childhood, since sexual abuse is strongly associated with shame and guilt due to social stigma and discrimination. In most cases, the child victim will never ask for help nor tell about the

¹ In this chapter, I use terms such as "telling," "speaking," and "voice" to address the basic human need for self-expression and communication with others. Since I am aware of those whose primary means of communication is not "speaking" or "voice," I make clear my use of the terms as metaphorical, not that of physiological capacity for speech.

² Susan L. Simonds, Bridging the Silence (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 2-5. For Korean survivors of sexual abuse, see Korean Institute of Criminology, Sexual Violence and Its Countermeasures in Korea (in Korean), vi, 216-17.

³ R. C. Summit, "The Child Abuse Accommodation Syndrome," Child Abuse and Neglect 7 (1983): 177-193, cited in Simonds, Bridging the Silence, 2.

event unless he/she can find some type of permission and power to share the secret.⁴ Similarly the average adult victim is voiceless unless she sees some possibility for a non-punitive response to her disclosure. Given an atmosphere of care and safety, however, the constraints of silence and secrecy give way to the fundamental, human need for speaking. It is clear among the women in this study that secrecy is a common experience shared as sexual abuse survivors. They are grouped, not only by their abuse experience, but also their experience of silence and secrecy about the abuse. When asked why they were silent, they felt it was obvious, but they answered the dumb question anyway. Each in her own way said that her silence was because of Korean society. In their minds, whether they grew up in Korea or the United States, it was not an issue of personal preference for sexually abused women to keep their abuse to themselves but of survival.

In various ways, they told about the influence of Korean culture on their silence. "You get stigma, not care" [Shim]; "Virginity is a big thing for women" [Sook and Kim]; "Because of my mom, because she might be concerned about my future" [Kim]; "After I married, I avoided the issue [virginity] for fear that it might be used to justify his abuse since I was the one who was ultimately responsible for his battering" [Sung]. It is obvious in these women's experiences that silence and secrecy are employed as an effort to accommodate Korean patriarchal society. They knew their telling of the truth would not affect their perpetrators so much as themselves, since they lived in a society in which truth is interpreted and judged differently according to gender. In their experiences, silence was necessitated because Korean society was not for them but for the abusers.

While silence is a common experience found among the women interviewed,

⁴ Ibid., 181-82.

another common experience shared by these women is that of speaking; the compelling need for silence never completely shut them up. To paint a picture of survivors' speaking about being abused, I simply juxtapose contrasting elements of the stories in this study.

Kim who had been struggling with her family rule of "tell not" was surprised when she realized that she had not kept her rape a total secret but had talked about it to several people. She confided the rape to her schoolmate about one year after it happened. She shared her story with a neighbor who was a sexual abuse survivor also. She told a boy friend she was dating, several speakers she met in school settings, youth leaders in church and, finally, a group of over one hundred young people.

Sook, the survivor of incest and rape, revealed the incest to her boss at work when her father became employed at the same factory where she worked. Her boss did not believe her, therefore, she quit her job. Soon after she first told, she confided the abuse to her boyfriend, whom she later lived with and eventually married. Later, she consulted a crisis center staff member about the incest and came to share her story with women she met at the shelter run by the center. Next, she spoke out to her family, her friends, and her relatives.

Shim, a date rape survivor, let her family know about the rape while going through depression and suicide attempts. She confided about the rape to her close friends and consulted a number of priests in her Catholic community. She then made contact with social and legal organizations for help, sending countless letters over a period of two decades. Finally, she came out on national television as a rape survivor.

Sung, who had been raped by her ex-fiancé, confided the abuse to her best friend and her new fiancé, who later became her husband. When abused by her husband in

marriage, she relied on the same friend as before and consulted a family friend whose expertise was counseling. Then she came out as a battered woman in women's groups and volunteered to share her story with other women for over a decade.

It is worth noting again that none of these women I interviewed kept their experiences of abuse in total secrecy even when they thought they suffered from their secrets. Though cautiously and in whispers, they were telling close friends for years before they came to stand in front of their families, women's Bible study groups, and television audiences. They experienced a steady progression from silence to whispering to speaking out. How can we interpret the women's speaking about their abuse in a society where they expect responses of stigmatization, rejection, and denial?

I believe the answer lies in the very act of telling. The fundamental human need for self-expression was the motivation for their telling about the abuse. Their need to communicate found an outlet and sustained its expressions in the midst of powerful Korean cultural taboos. Their speaking of the abuse, I believe, was a powerful reflection of the human need for self-expression, which is never completely defeated by any social taboos. The radical need in these women, however, carried with it a stigma in Korean culture, so it was rarely acknowledged and, even less frequently claimed by the women as their right. This dilemma is surely beyond the women themselves since Korean women have a long history in which women's speaking has been never positively received and, thus, has been extremely controlled within the Korean culture.⁵ The dilemma of these

⁵ Refer to the following articles which studied language patterns and morals of Korean women from ancient, through the Yi-dynasty, to modern periods. Eul-whan Lee, "Language Moral in Pattern of Korean Ancient Women" (in Korean), *Journal of Asian Women* 13 (1974): 77-102; "The Women's Use of Language during Yi Dynasty" (in Korean), *Journal of Asian Women* 15 (1976): 5-29; "A Study of Language Norms in the Book of Kyenyoso" (in Korean), *Journal of Asian Women* 29 (1990): 7-38; and "A Study of Language Moral in the Book of Women's Speaking" (in Korean), *Journal of Asian Women* 19 (1980): 73-94. See also Tae-jin Chang, "A Study of Modern Korean Women's Speech" (in Korean),

women, that is, their unclaimed need for self-expression in spite of its powerful presence in their lives, may be examined through the reasons and motivations they attributed to their telling.

The women interviewed were quite articulate about why they told about their abuse to family, women's Bible study groups and TV audiences. They did so in order to: glorify God by making the abuse useful for others [Kim]; make things straight for the family, especially for her two sisters who were also victims, by revealing who the abuser is [Sook]; heal herself and help other survivors by telling about the rape [Shim]; and to be of help to other women and younger generations by telling about abuse in marriage [Sung]. They were clear about their reasons for telling in terms of their faith, justice and benefit to others and themselves. The same question, however, turned out to be a puzzle for these women when it related to their relatively earlier incidences in telling. They hardly recalled why they told of their abuse to a boyfriend, a neighbor, and a schoolmate in the first place. They did not feel that they told for the same reasons as in the later instances of speaking out. They were not sure why, but they knew that they did it because it was true; they were telling what really happened.

What we hear from these women is a gap in their reasoning for speaking about the abuse. It is worthwhile to explore the differences in motivation. The point is not to discount what they already stated but to see the dilemma women suffer in Korean society: they need to speak out but do not see this as their right. We can begin by focusing on the women's earlier experiences of speaking out. In those earlier talks, the women did not seem to need a rationale for telling about their abuse. They could tell their stories of

being abused simply because they wanted to. They did it because the abuse really happened and they wanted to tell about it. Strangely enough, the most radical human experiences seem to go unnamed, unrecognized or unappreciated, precisely because they are so basic to our survival. Speaking as a primary means of communication is a fundamentally human experience, regardless of the rationale involved. It is essential, for example, for a person's growth, a society's solidarity, and humankind's future existence. Yet, in its obvious necessity, speaking tends to hide itself within plain sight.

Such communicating, radically human but so very plain and nameless, is what we see in these women's earlier experiences of telling. The need for speaking in these women was so obvious that it did not even attract their attention. Nevertheless, it gave birth to their small talks and sustained them for years, even when no one asked the women for the rationale or purpose for their telling; the women did not need to prove their need for speaking. As the women recalled, there were no particular reasons why they confided the abuse to their close friends. There was nothing unusual; therefore, the act of sharing remained unnamed and unappreciated in these women's experiences. We may infer the women's telling was based on their need to speak out; they were not really aware of their powerful need to name and give expression to their abuse. Thus, even when telling, they did not really claim the full power of this act. The need for self-expression by speaking, not being claimed as their right and power, remained nameless, though powerfully present in these women's experiences. This problem was not resolved but continued to persist in the very rationale or purpose of their later occasions of speaking out.

In regard to these relatively later experiences of speaking, we begin to hear why

they told their stories of abuse to youth, family members and other women. The women were articulate about the specific purpose in their sharing in terms of their faith, justice, and good will. Compared with their earlier occasions of telling, the women seem to have expanded and deepened their telling. They have increasingly organized and presented their abuse stories, not just to tell them but for a self-conscious purpose or cause. We can see this movement as an intellectual achievement in that they could put their abuse in a context that was socially approved and thereby could relate to it in a more meaningful way. Nevertheless, we may raise some questions. What other factors might be present to change their thinking? Why did the women attempt to put their abuse in the perspective of a purpose or cause? Why did the women tell their abuse to glorify God rather than simply to say that this is what really happened to me and I want God's justice? Why did the women tell about their abuse on behalf of others, rather than simply say that this is what happened to me and I am telling this for my own good? In short, why did the women find it so difficult to tell their abuse stories without any altruistic reason or purpose?

Again, my point is not to dismiss as a mere excuse the women's faith in God, justice, or good will; through this they summoned their courage to tell about the abuse. These women were developing social and intellectual maturity as they traveled the arduous journey as sexual abuse survivors, reaching towards a point where their stories would be heard in Korean society. Nevertheless, I cannot help but question the gap in their reasons or purposes in telling about the abuse, the gap between their voices for others and themselves. What force was present in the gap? This force helped the women discern a good purpose for telling; it also moderated what was told. Somehow the women knew

that, in Korean society, they dare not tell about their abuse without an altruistic reason. They were keenly aware that telling without a good reason would only bring shame on themselves and offend others. They also were aware that telling about the abuse in and of itself could not be emphasized above the reason for sharing it. These observations were not made by the women themselves, but they arise from the way they described their motivations for speaking out.

Here, I see a double handicap in the seemingly improved speaking of these women. Previously the women's need for speaking of the abuse was unclaimed as their human right, and this unclaimed need was difficult to justify later. In other words, the need to tell about abuse, good enough in the earlier stage of speaking out, was experienced as insufficient later without a good purpose to justify it. This double handicap in the latter experiences of speaking out may be explained by pointing to the difference in the context for speaking, the difference between relatively more private and more public settings of the occasions. Even so, a question still remains. Why is that so? Why do occasions of speaking out publicly to larger gatherings need a stronger rationale than speaking to private smaller gatherings? Who would be most upset if women relate the abuse on a factual level and let it stand by itself? Behind the very rationale presented by the women for their truth-telling, paradoxically I see a refusal of the Korean patriarchal society to listen to any sexual abuse survivors, especially those who are offensive because they do not know how to justify their speaking out.

In the relatively early stages, the women's need for self-expression by speaking was not recognized and, thereby, was unclaimed as a source of power. The same need for speaking out was unclaimed in their later experiences, not by the women's

unawareness but by their keen awareness of their need to tell about abuse is not acceptable without a good reason to justify it. Therefore, the need for speaking out, unclaimed as their right and power, handicapped their attempts at telling about the abuse. The women suffered throughout the process of speaking without such awareness, even when they courageously spoke out. This is why they were so courageous while at the same time so vulnerable to the way society responded to their telling. This is why they were silent about what was obvious in their experience; they did not realize that it is all right to tell about abuse without justification. Telling about abuse is justified by the very human need for speaking; it does not need an additional altruistic reason. Nothing is more human and radical than the desire to name and claim one's experience; this is a their fundamental human need and the very source of a person's power.

Behind the dilemma of these women, there is a long history of Korean women whose need to speak out, and therefore their power, has been totally rejected.⁶ In a sense, Korean patriarchal society has not acknowledged women's need to speak out; this is reflected in the very way that women have not recognized their own need for speaking. Korean society is not yet a positive force to empower women to name their needs, rights, and powers on their own terms. In this respect, the dilemma faced by women is a powerful indicator of what they are struggling with and where they are going in Korean society. I believe the women interviewed for this study are in the process of naming their experiences of sexual abuse in terms of their needs, rights, and powers in the very telling of their abuse. To name their speaking from within, and to claim this as a significant and

⁶ See especially Eul-whan Lee, "The Women's Use of Language during Yi Dynasty," "A Study of Language Norms in the Book of Kyenyoso," and "A Study of Language Moral in the Book of Women's speaking."

powerful action, challenges women and Korean society, simply because this is new to both. The voice of sexual abuse survivors emerges from the integration of their need, right, and power to name and claim their stories, which will impact Korean history.

I have discussed so far two major points found in women's experiences of speaking out of silence -- the women's gradual telling about their sexual abuse and the invisible suffering involved. These two points portray Korean survivors of sexual abuse as simultaneously courageous and vulnerable. The Korean survivors' need for speaking was strong enough to overcome Korean social taboos; nevertheless, they suffered from their disowned needs, rights, and powers for speaking out, even when they bravely spoke out about their abuse. This is a problem tied to Korean patriarchal society as well as the healing process of the individual survivor. To do justice to other parts of the women's experiences, however, will require that several other points be made.

One important issue in relation to the women's experience of telling about their abuse is the context in which they spoke. While they had strong needs for telling the truth about their abuse, they suffered from a lack of safe places in which they could be heard and mirrored positively with respect and genuine caring. Women were overwhelmed when they went directly to speaking out in public without sufficient experience of self-disclosure in a caring and safe environment, as in the cases of Kim and Shim. Even in women's study groups, it can be difficult to give enough space and care to a member's disclosure of abuse, as in the case of Sung. These women were sure what they did was right but suffered from lack of safety and support. Since there were remarkably few social services such as therapy and survivor support groups, they lacked resources and environments with which to meet their needs and foster the healing process.

This issue will be discussed more in relation to autobiography groups for sexual abuse survivors in the last section of this chapter.

Another important issue, which did not get enough attention in the above discussion, is the role of one's self in the process of speaking out. It is worth noting that telling the truth involves developing inner strength, a growth enabling survivors to view sexual abuse in a different way from what is conventionally understood. Sexual abuse survivors' speaking about their abuse does not arise solely out of the pain they suffered, or their need for relationships, or even the human need to speak out itself, although this is indispensable, as discussed above. Along with these contributing factors, it is necessary for the survivor to be a subjective agent whereby she sees her experiences as a source for truth and interprets what happened to her through dialogue with her resources. Without such a growth in the self, it is difficult to tell the truth in the face of social stigma. Thus, the development of women's voices is not only a reflection of the need for speaking out, but also a powerful indicator for the growing self.

In addition to the importance of self-growth in speaking out, the issue of outside resources is also important to understanding the process. In the previous discussion, I may have given the impression that resources are self-alienating. This is true when resources stand in the way of one's self-affirmation; however, resources can be powerful tools empowering one to speak. The positive role of the resources is what the women recognized and most appreciated in their speaking out process. For Kim, her Christian faith was a primary resource for telling the truth about her life. For Shim and Sung, feminist studies were their primary resources for empowerment. For Sook, support from a crisis center, born in a feminist movement and run by feminist volunteers, was behind

her telling the truth. Thus, major resources utilized by the women included mainly those related to feminism and, to some degree, those related to Christianity. Note the relationship between the voice, the self, and the resources involved in the speaking process. Silence and secrecy indicate the helpless self with few resources; a strong voice is equipped with resources and by the impulses of a growing self. Thus, in the experiences of the women, the strength behind their telling is proportional to their self growth and their resources. Therefore, it may be said that the continuum of the women's voices is an indicator of their inner journeys for finding themselves and their voices, and the resources and communities which support them. These issues will be explored later in relation to the psychosocial meaning of telling truth.

Speaking-out, as an effort to heal oneself, is not explicit in the stories of the women interviewed, except for Shim. This action is powerfully present in the history of women speaking out, however. More importantly, it is clearly manifest in the motivation described by the interviewees. All these women spoke about their abuse experiences, since they wanted to transform them into something useful for others and thereby something meaningful for themselves. Here we see their speaking out is not only a matter of telling the truth, but is also closely related with their efforts to restore themselves and others. Breaking silence regarding one's sexual abuse is an essential part of healing, since it helps the survivor re-channel the trauma that would otherwise destroy her sense of who she is and wither her relationships with others.⁷ For the women, speaking out is the effort to re-channel negative feelings about the self, others, Korean culture, and the divine, which are the major impact of sexual abuse as discussed in

⁷ Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 92.

Chapter 4. Without re-channeling such negative feelings, they cannot enjoy meaningful relationships. The need to relate positively to the self and others is at the core of their healing effort. This issue is intimately related to the intrapsychic meaning of truth-telling, which will be discussed in the next section in this chapter.

Finally, a dual purpose for telling is shared by all the women in this study to some degree. They spoke about their abuse to make sense of the abuse and heal themselves. At the same time, their telling was motivated by the desire to benefit other survivors of sexual abuse. They wanted to transform the pain and suffering they experienced into useful resources for other survivors. In being useful for other survivors, they sought meaning and purpose in their abuse experience. It is for themselves and for other survivors that they spoke, wrote, and wanted to make a shelter. The women felt a connection with other survivors and wanted to hear and be heard by them for mutual healing. This indicates the need for survivor support groups, something not yet available in Korea.

The four women interviewed all experienced a transition from silence to speaking about their abuse. Each woman took a different course, used different resources, and had differing motivations to arrive at telling the truth about her abuse. While they traveled on different paths, they shared a deep-seated need to tell the truth about themselves. The problem appears to be in the tension between their need to tell and society's unwillingness to hear and provide safe contexts where they can speak. In this respect, their courage to tell the truth was countered by the absence of social concern and support. Nevertheless, their speaking had significance for their healing journey and at the same time for understanding human nature and growth in relational terms, not in terms of

secrecy and separation.

Speaking and Healing: The Intrapsychic Meaning of Telling the Truth

Recently, discussions about women's voice have served as a central metaphor for the self, since this metaphor is viewed as a channel of psychic expression.⁸ Voice is thought of as a "pathway that brings the inner psychic world of feelings and thoughts out into the open air of relationship where it can be heard by oneself and by other people."⁹ In other words, voice is thought of as relational in nature. Brown and Gilligan state: "Voice, because it is embodied, connects rather than separates psyche and body; because voice is in language, it also joins psyche and culture. Voice is inherently relational." In this section, I focus on voice as a channel of psychic expression whereby I enter into dialogue with object relations theory to see the psychological meaning of breaking silence as experienced by the women interviewed in this study.

Object relations theory provides a usable language to explore the inner world of survivors of sexual abuse as related to the outer world they experience. The term "object relations theory" refers to conceptualization in the psychodynamic tradition that posits that human motivational energy is object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking. Pleasure is not the end goal of libidinal energy, but a means to its real end -- relations with another.¹⁰ From this perspective, the human infant is born with the primary need for human contact and relationships. The ego, as the coping part of the self, relates to

⁸ Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 23.

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 154.

external objects from birth. “Object” refers to a person or thing invested with emotional energy such as love and hate. An “external object” is an actual person, thing, or place invested with emotions while an “internal object” is a mental representation inside the ego, as an image, feeling, memory, etc. based on actual objects. Through object-relations, the ego develops: “The importance of object-relations lies in the fact that without them the ego cannot develop.”¹¹ From this perspective, healthy psychological development is determined by a dialectical process of a person’s experience with external and internal objects; emotional development is determined by the quality of this person’s external objects relations shaping his/her inner reality and giving rise to internal objects; the quality of his/her relationship to internal objects in turn influences the way he/she relates to external objects.

When a person experiences traumatic sexual violence, he/she internalizes it, forming internal objects which represent the external people involved in the trauma. Pastoral psychologist Carrie Doebling states:

[I]n traumatization resulting from sexual assault, the assailant becomes internally represented. Others who may be involved during the traumatization -- parents, friends, the police, personnel from social services, the hospital and the judicial system--also become internally represented.¹²

In the inner world, the self- and object-representations do not exist independently but rather in “object relations units.”¹³ These units consist of a self-representation and

¹¹ Harry Guntrip, Schizoid Phenomena, Object-Relations, and the Self (New York: International Universities Press, 1969), 91.

¹² Carrie Doebling, Internal Desecration, 20.

¹³ Gregory N. Hamilton, Self and Others: Object Relations Theory in Practice (Northvale, N. J.: Jason Aronson, 1992), 13.

internal object-representation connected by affects such as love or hate.¹⁴ In the trauma of sexual abuse, for example, the self is experienced as expendable and unworthy and the abuser as violent. The affect connecting self and object is fear and shame, which are felt as “badness” to the self.¹⁵ Thus, a bad self, a bad object, and the affect of fear and shame comprise an all-bad object relations unit. Such an all-bad object relations unit threatens the core of the personality, or the self, which is experienced as intolerably painful. Fairbairn states:

What are primarily repressed are neither intolerably guilty impulses nor intolerably unpleasant memories, but intolerably bad internalized objects The victim of sexual assault resists the revival of the traumatic memory primarily because this memory represents a record of a relationship with a bad object.¹⁶

Repression, denial, and secrecy about sexual abuse are all related to internalized bad object relationships in which the self and object representations are bound to shame, fear, or anger as related to the experience of sexual abuse. In other words, the survivor of sexual abuse is tied to an internal bad object, which represents the abuser, through shame, fear or helplessness. The internal tie to the bad object may take a form of “identification with the aggressor.”¹⁷ The victim identifies with the abuser to deal with powerlessness and becomes aggressive. Or, the victim may identify with the abuser’s view of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵ From an object relations perspective, especially in Fairbairn’s theory, “badness” means depriving or being deprived. A “bad” object, both internal and external, is the one frustrating the object-seeking of the libido by its absence, unresponsiveness, or destructiveness. A “bad” self, always internal, is the one which is deprived, ungratified, or hurt. See Greenberg and Mitchell, Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory, 176.

¹⁶ W. R. D. Fairbairn, “The Repression and the Return of the Bad Objects (with Special Reference to the ‘War Neuroses’),” in Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality (London: Tavistock, 1952), 62-3, cited in Doebling, Internal Desecration, 19.

¹⁷ H. P. Blum, “The Role of Identification in the Resolution of Trauma: The Anna Freud Memorial Lecture,” Psychoanalytic Quarterly 56 (1987): 56, cited in Doebling, Internal Desecration, 20.

victim,¹⁸ which causes profound self-hatred and disregard in the victim. Unless the internal tie between the bad self and the bad object is resolved, the survivor of sexual abuse is caught in the hopeless dilemma of the repetition of past trauma, creating a situation in which the person is to be either a victim or an abuser. Unless the attachment of the bad self to its component bad object is renounced, the survivor's capacity for making direct and full contact with real other human beings cannot be fully developed.

In Fairbairn's view, such bad object relations are resistant to the influence of external good objects as well as being ego-splitting and the source of psychopathology.¹⁹

He states:

[S]ince the nature of these relationships is the ultimate source of both symptoms and deviations of character, it becomes still another aim of psychoanalytic treatment to effect breaches of the closed system which constitute the patient's inner world, and thus to make this world accessible to the influence of outer reality.²⁰

In Fairbairn's theory, the phenomenon of resistance on the part of the patient results from the patient's internal tie to his/her bad objects, that is, the person's unconscious determination to preserve his/her inner world as a closed system.²¹ Affects such as guilt

¹⁸ Ibid., 65.

¹⁹ In Fairbairn's theory, the ego is unitary and whole with its own libidinal energy seeking relations with real external objects. If these relations are satisfactory, the ego remains its original wholeness. When relations with external objects are unsatisfactory, which are bad objects, the ego internalizes them in an effort for control, splitting the internalized bad object into three parts, exciting object, rejecting object and ideal object. In the process, the ego is also split into three parts, libidinal ego, anti-libidinal ego and central ego in relation to the three split parts of the internal object. In addition to the self's attachment to internal bad objects, Fairbairn argued, the splitting of the ego lies at the center of all psychopathology. See Fairbairn, *From Instinct to Self: Selected Papers of W. R. D. Fairbairn*, eds. David E. Scharff and Ellinor F. Birtles, vol. 1 (Northvale, N. J.: Jason Aronson, 1994), 75, 117. See also Greenberg and Mitchell, 163-74.

²⁰ Fairbairn, "On the Nature and Aims of Psychoanalytical Treatment," in *From Instinct to Self*, eds. David E. Scharff and Ellinor F. Birtles, 84.

²¹ Ibid., 84.

are experienced when the self component of that relationship threatens to separate from the bad object by the influence of an external good object such as a therapist.

As therapy progresses, a patient is conflicted between his/her loyalty to the bad object and the longing to enter into a good object relationship that will promote separation from the bad object.²² Fairbairn provides a segment from his cases showing a breach in a patient's attachment to his internal bad objects. The patient had been "recalcitrant" to his parents for a long time. In the patient's dreams, his parents appear as bad objects and the analyst as a good object; the patient is between the bad and good object relationships. The patient's two dreams are:

I was out walking with my father; and we met you. You handed me a book or paper. My father protested that I was neglecting or forsaking him; but I did acknowledge you.

I was talking to you; but at the same time I was in bed with my mother. I felt embarrassed, because my mother was listening to what I was saying to you. Sometimes my mother leaned over me and came in contact with me. This horrified me and made me shrink away from her. But I did not stop talking to you.²³

According to Fairbairn, the preceding dreams show the impact of a realistic relationship with the analyst, in the outer world, upon the patient's relationships with the figures of his parents, in the inner world. The therapeutic impact promotes a breach in the closed system of the patient's inner reality, and thereby fosters a rupture in his internal tie to bad objects.

Fairbairn's theory offers a vantage point to see the continuum of the survivor's voice in terms of her relationship with internal objects. The change in voice, as a channel

²² Jeffrey Seinfeld, *The Bad Object: Handling the Negative Therapeutic Reaction in Psychotherapy* (Northvale, N. J.: Jason Aronson, 1993), x.

²³ Fairbairn, "On the Nature and Aims of Psychoanalytical Treatment," 85-6.

of psychic expressions, indicates the change in the way the survivor relates to her internal objects. Breaking silence and telling the truth about sexual abuse is evidence of a breach in the survivor's loyalty to and fear of the bad object. In silence and secrecy, it is the bad object representation of a perpetrator dominating the survivor's inner world. Through feelings of shame, worthlessness, fear, and self-hatred, the self is controlled and possessed by the bad object, even long after the actual abuser is gone or even dead. Feelings have referential contents. They refer to some objects, both internal and external, which gave birth to affects. Shame, worthlessness, and fear which thrive in an atmosphere of silence and secrecy are not only the affects connecting the bad object unit but also a reference to its dominance in the survivor's inner reality.

In outer reality, the victim's telling frequently ignites the wrath of the abuser.²⁴ The victim's self-disclosure is the last thing the abuser wishes to hear, since it means his loss of control over the victim as well as his facing his own badness. The same is true of the survivor's inner reality, even when the abuser is no longer on the scene. In telling the truth, the self is extremely vulnerable to the counter-attack of the bad object. The self is beset by anxiety. Feelings of terror and anguish, self-doubt and depression, numbness and dissociation, or unbearable hopelessness are triggered when the binding taboo of secrecy is broken between the bad self and the bad object. These are defensive feelings of the bad object itself, which is in a panic about losing its power over the long-standing partner on the one hand while separating from what it has so long been identified with on the other hand. Telling the truth promotes the separation of the self from its bad object, triggering anxiety from both sides. This is why telling the truth is a powerful healing

²⁴ Bass and Davis, 93.

tool²⁵ and, at the same time, why it is so difficult for survivors of sexual abuse.

Truth-telling about sexual abuse is a process according to which the split-off self possessed by the bad object is gradually restored to the core of personality. A survivor of sexual abuse describes her experience of telling:

For me there were at least three different levels of telling. The first was telling the story and not feeling anything. Telling it as a third-party story. . . . Then there was a really painful, scary level of telling. The tone of my voice changed and I looked like I was seven years old. My language was more simple. And it hurt. . . . The last way I've told has to do with stepping back and seeing the bigger picture. I looked at family dynamics and got the rest of the story. I saw what happened and why it happened. I put the abuse through a sieve and was able to see parts of it I couldn't see when I was only hurt or angry.²⁶

Through the process of telling, this survivor began to find her voice, her feeling, her self, and her perspective, which had been engulfed by her internal bad objects. Such a recovery process could not be possible unless there were an underlying breakdown within the all-bad object relations units in her intrapsychic reality, promoted by the survivor's breaking the silence and telling the truth in the first place.

Ellen Bass and Laura Davis put an emphasis on breaking the silence and telling about the abuse as an "essential part of healing." They state why telling is transformative in a descriptive way:

1. You move through the shame and secrecy that keeps you isolated.
2. You move through denial and acknowledge the truth of your abuse.
3. You make it possible to get understanding and help.
4. You get more in touch with your feelings.
5. You get a chance to see your experience and yourself through the compassionate eyes of a supporter.
6. You make space in relationships for the kind of intimacy that comes from honesty.

²⁵ Ibid., 92.

²⁶ Ibid., 98.

7. You establish yourself as a person in the present who is dealing with the abuse in her past.
8. You join a courageous community of women who are no longer willing to suffer in silence.
9. You help end child [and adult] sexual abuse by breaking the silence in which it thrives.
10. You become a model for other survivors.
11. You eventually feel proud and strong.²⁷

The effects of telling described by Bass and David can be put into object relations terms. Through telling the truth, the self turns away from the bad object that possessed it for a long time and moves toward good objects in outer reality. The split-off self engulfed by the bad object is now restored to the core of personality, feeling authentic and whole, and finding its sacred power to relate. It is the journey of the little girl in the opening story of this study to find the power to name her self and invite her friends to her secret room which is no longer ruled by a negative voice who called her a “bad” girl.

I have discussed the power of truth telling and its implications for survivors of sexual abuse from an object relations perspective. While object relations theory provides useful concepts such as the “bad object” for understanding traumatization, such internal objects tend to overlook the context of a patriarchal society which functions as a gigantic external bad object for Korean survivors of sexual abuse. Since the suffering of sexual abuse survivors is inseparably interwoven with the outer reality of patriarchal culture as shown in the previous chapter, telling the truth has to go beyond inner reality. This is where the limits of object relations theory raise the need for alternative perspectives.

²⁷ Ibid., 95.

Speaking and Knowing: The Psychosocial Meaning of Telling the Truth

The work of Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, and Jill Tarule offers a significant vantage point to see where survivors of sexual abuse came from and where they are going in their journey of knowing. The journey of knowing for survivors of sexual abuse is worth discussing since their healing from sexual abuse is as much psychosocial as their suffering is. As discussed in Chapter 4, Korean patriarchal culture plays a central role in survivors' knowing who they are, what sexual abuse means, and how they relate to society as sexually abused women. The study of Belenky and her colleagues shows how women's self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined.²⁸ It also reveals society's influence on women's ways of knowing through examining the role of two primary institutions, the family and the schools.²⁹ While the study of Belenky and her colleagues could be significant for the understanding of female survivors' ways of knowing and the role of society undergirding them, I focus on how it sheds light on the transition from silence to speaking.

Belenky and her colleagues traced women's intellectual development, focusing on changes in women's voice and self. In the authors' point of view, change in voice is an indicator for change in self, changes which are accompanied by related changes in ways of perceiving and interacting with the world. Their research started with the insight that women's ways of knowing are different from those of men, since relationships often play a more central role in women's understanding of who they are, what truth is, and how

²⁸ Mary Belenky et al., Women's Way of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 23-52.

²⁹ Ibid., 155-229.

they relate to society.³⁰

From their findings, Belenky et al. theorized five different perspectives on knowing. In each perspective women differently experience the self, the world, and knowledge. The five epistemological perspectives or positions are: (1) silence, (2) received knowledge, (3) subjective knowledge, (4) procedural knowledge, and (5) constructed knowledge. While these epistemological positions are not used as universal nor hierarchical, as the researchers warned, the categories show “why and when women shift from one mode of knowing to another.”³¹ I draw on the Belenky et al. scheme to see how social factors interrelate with women’s ways of knowing, with special attention to survivors’ silence, and their breaking of silence. I will describe each epistemological perspective with particular attention to the interplay between the social and the psychological factors in the process of survivors’ speaking out.

The first perspective is silence, a position of not knowing in which a woman feels voiceless, powerless, and mindless, being subject to the whims of external authority.³² She is unaware of her potential intelligence, although she indeed has it. She develops language but does not cultivate her capacity for representational thought, resulting in the absence of her inner voices as well as no confidence to learn through words. With little

³⁰ Belenky and her colleagues’ study on women’s epistemological development started with critique of William Perry’s theory of intellectual development of young adults, whose research subjects consisted mostly of male college students. See William G. Perry, Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970).

³¹ I am aware of a potential danger of value judgments when I compare one position of knowing with another. My use of the scheme is not to evaluate each other in a hierarchical way, but to understand the interplay between the social and the psychological factors involved in each epistemological position which intimately relate to the process of survivors’ speaking out. See Belenky et al., 15.

³² Ibid., 15. See also Nancy R. Goldberger, “Looking Backward, Looking Forward,” in Knowledge, Difference, and Power: Essays Inspired by Women’s Ways of Knowing, eds. Nancy R. Goldberger et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 4.

intellectual power to think and communicate, she is extremely limited in developing meaningful dialogue with herself, others, and the world (hence the name, the “silence” perspective), and thereby has no meaningful relationship with herself, others, and the world.

Deprived of real talk and real relationships, she lives in “intellectual” silence regardless of the volume of her voice and the size of her action. She depends completely on external authority for knowledge and direction. The source of her self-knowledge is lodged in others, not in the self, and powerlessness is a dominant self-feeling inside her. She accepts extreme sex-role stereotypes and endures even life-threatening violence, sexual or physical. If she is a sexual abuse survivor, she tends to repeat the abuse: she may abuse her children, or allow herself and her children to be abused by her spouse. Thus, in the study of Belenky et al., the abuse experience, sexual or physical, is a pervasive background theme of women in this stage.³³ Life is viewed in terms of polarities such as good or bad, win or lose. In this stage, her husband or any male is often her authority.

The second perspective is received knowledge, a position in which knowledge and authority are construed as outside the self and invested in all-knowing, powerful others from whom a woman is expected to learn.³⁴ Unlike the silent woman in the first stage, the woman in this stage conceives of herself as capable of receiving knowledge through careful “listening,” which gives her confidence that she can do the right thing. As a received knower, she conforms to the conventions of her society, using the moral

³³ Belenky et al., 29.

³⁴ Ibid., 15.

language of “should” and “ought”³⁵ and viewing life in terms of dichotomies such as right or wrong, good or evil. She not only accepts sex-role stereotypes but strives to live up to the cultural standards for a “good” woman, devoting herself to the care of others while remaining “self-less.”

If she is a survivor of sexual abuse, she does not try to explain nor express anger at her sexual abuse in childhood.³⁶ In her mind, such a thing just happened, since she has not yet developed self-trust and self-empathy, or independent thought, which are necessary to face and challenge sexual abuse in her life. The abuse experience is neither a source of questions nor anger. Such inability to speak out to protest is the pervasive background theme of the women in the stage of received knowledge.³⁷ Her self-definition is external, centering on her social roles such as a “mother” or “teacher,” equating social and occupational changes with changes in the self. Unable to see herself as growing, evolving and changing, or as a source of knowledge, she often relies on others in her life for knowledge, direction, and care.

The third perspective is subjective knowledge, a position in which knowledge is personal, private, and based on intuition and feeling states.³⁸ Unlike the received knower, a woman in this stage discovers her firsthand experience as a source of truth and starts to hear and value her own inner voice. Touched by her inner power, she begins to change from a “static” self to “becoming,” from passivity to active, and from silence to

³⁵ Ibid., 45.

³⁷ Ibid., 166.

³⁷ Ibid., 166.

³⁸ Ibid., 15.

protesting, drawing from an inner voice.³⁹ Nonetheless, women in this stage can respond differently to their awakened subjective self according to their personal and familial histories. A woman can be a polite listener or spectator who prefers to observe rather than reveal herself. Such women are called “hidden multiplists” and usually came from advantaged backgrounds. On the contrary, a disadvantaged woman can be more expressive about her subjective self, and is usually angry at external authorities who failed her trust.

One of the pervasive background themes, shared by the disadvantaged women in the study of Belenky et al., is that of “sexual harassment and abuse.”⁴⁰ The abuse shattered their trust in male authority and led them to question what they received as knowledge and truth. Unlike sexually abused women in the first and second stages of knowing, a woman in this stage often chooses to leave her violent husband. And, a survivor in this stage protests against her sexual abuse in childhood, telling the truth and confronting the abuser. While this position of knowing is a revolutionary step, there are remnants of dichotomous and absolutist thinking in terms of the reverse locus of truth and of the static belief in the right answer. Truth now resides within the person; she is guided by her inner feelings and infallible instincts rather indiscriminately.

The fourth perspective is procedural knowledge, a position in which knowledge is acquired through objective procedures and defended with evidence. When in this perspective, a woman begins to listen to the voice of reason: she invests herself in learning and applying methods for obtaining knowledge, which is based on thought and

³⁹ Belenky et al., 54.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 58.

articulated ideas. In the process of knowing, she can go in two different directions: separated knowing and connected knowing. In separated knowing, procedures are strictly impersonal as in the sciences: the knower divorces herself from the objects of knowing, thus experiencing the self as essentially separate, skeptical, and autonomous.⁴¹ In connected knowing, a stance of belief and empathy are actively employed to enter the other person's idea or framework and to discover the meaning of the other's point of view; the knower connects herself to another person for understanding and thereby experiences the self as essentially relational, trusting, and response-able.⁴² Both knowers are objective in the sense of being "oriented away from the self" toward the object the knowers seek to analyze or understand.⁴³

The nature of procedural knowledge is accommodation to the object rather than assimilation of the object to the knowers' mind.⁴⁴ This "selfless aspect" of procedural knowledge in an effort for accommodation causes alienation in the knowers, although it is an intellectual achievement, and limits itself as knowledge within the system.⁴⁵ We may infer that a sexual abuse survivor in this stage can criticize the problem of sexual abuse in a rational, analytical, and public way, but only within the society's system, and only according to the system's moral standards. She wants society not to tolerate any more silence about sexual abuse; however, she usually does not question the premises of the patriarchal society itself.

⁴¹ Ibid., 102, 109.

⁴² Ibid., 102, 113.

⁴³ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 127.

The final perspective is constructed knowledge, a position in which truth is understood to be contextual and tentative rather than universal and absolute. In this perspective, a woman experiences herself as a creator of knowledge, values multiple approaches to knowing, and brings the self and personal commitment into the center of the knowing process.⁴⁶ This epistemological position comes by the process of searching for the authentic self, who is nascent in subjective knowledge but suppressed in objective procedures. Through the process of reclaiming the self, the knower is able to think about the way she thinks and attempts to integrate some dichotomous splits found in previous ways of knowing: between speaking and listening, private and public authorities, thinking and feeling.⁴⁷

Through the process of integration, she arrives at the insight of different perspectives and points produce different answers; “answers to all questions vary depending on the context in which they are asked and on the frame of reference of the person doing the asking.”⁴⁸ With the freedom gained from the insight that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed beyond the givens, and with the empathy accompanied by the self as newly reclaimed and integrated, the knower commits herself to the empowerment and improvement in the quality of life of others.⁴⁹ We may infer a sexual abuse survivor in this stage will often call into question patriarchal society as the basis for sexual abuse; she may also make a commitment to creating alternative societies while making connections with other survivors for mutual care and justice.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 134-35, 144.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 143, 152.

As shown above, the epistemological model of Belenky and her colleagues brings to light the major ways women think about themselves, authorities, and truth in patriarchal societies. Even though the study is not about sexual abuse survivors, it serves as a window to see the process of losing and finding voice as survivors journey in knowing. In this respect, several points can be discussed in relation to the power of speaking by sexual abuse survivors.

It is noteworthy that sexual abuse is one of the major contextual factors contributing to the destruction of a woman's reality.⁵⁰ The suffering of Korean survivors of sexual abuse, discussed in the previous chapter, is an illustration of the destruction of their reality, in regards to the collapse of self-esteem, intimacy, social networks, and spiritual relationships with God. Their suffering is suffering from their shattered reality and their experience of being outsiders in society. Not all survivors of sexual abuse, however, begin to see their sexual abuse as a source of knowledge. Sexual abuse may end women's journey of knowing in silence. If their situation and inner impulses permit, sexual abuse survivors will make a transition from received knowing to subjective personal knowing in the midst of their suffering.

"Really talking," "saying what you mean," "speaking up," and "telling the truth" are significant signs of a movement from listening to speaking, and from an external locus of authority to an internal one, accompanied by the budding subjective self. Survivors of sexual abuse in this stage may cry out with agony and anger like Shim, a rape survivor: "In a sense, God invited me to participate in Jesus' suffering. Although I followed that line of thinking, I came back again to why? Isn't it evil to destroy my life?" The

⁵⁰ Ibid., 56-60.

survivor finally arrived at the conclusion; “It is not me, but the abuser and the culture which supports him, who should be shamed and judged as sinners.” Such a firm voice, and the intense feeling of anger with little ambiguity as to truth, came from a survivor who enters the position of subjective knowing based on her firsthand experience.

The power of speaking out by sexual abuse survivors lies partly in the transformation of trauma stories into a source of questions and knowledge. Survivors of sexual abuse are at an epistemologically significant position in which their sexual abuse experience is used as a criterion to test the knowledge they received, the culture they inherited and will hand down to next generations. Rosemary R. Ruether states:

Human experience is the starting point and the ending point of the hermeneutical circle. Codified tradition both reaches back to roots in experience and is constantly renewed or discarded through the test of experience. “Experience” includes experience of the divine, experience of oneself, and experience of the community and the world, in an interacting dialectic....If a symbol does not speak authentically to experience, it becomes dead or must be altered to provide a new meaning.⁵¹

The use of women’s sexual abuse experience, therefore, is a critical force both to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge. For example, ethical codes such as the “shoulds” and “should-nots” about female sexuality discussed in the previous chapter, have been accepted by women in Korean traditional society; they died for their chastity according to their received knowledge. Sexual abuse survivors in the position of subjective knowledge call into question the “shoulds” and “should-nots” by using their own experience of sexual abuse as a criterion of truth. They question: Whose voice is behind that knowledge? Who is speaking? Who is speaking in what body? Who is speaking from whose experience and whose perspective? In what societal and cultural

⁵¹ Rosemary R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 12.

frameworks?⁵² For what? Is there absence of well-being? And, whose?⁵³

These questions unmask the dominant voice speaking behind a seemingly natural body of knowledge; it is the male voice in a male body in a patriarchal society that is governed by men within the framework of Korean Confucianism. Knowledge produced in such a framework has not only lent itself to sexual violence; it also silenced the voice of victims metaphorically and literally, sometimes taking their lives in the name of virtue. What has been thought of as truth is no longer truth in the eyes of sexual abuse survivors but arbitrary norms of ill-being that guard the privilege of the few, usually adult men in positions of power, at the expense of the many.

The power of speaking out by sexual abuse survivors also lies in the transformation from a victim to a messenger. These women were once victims of sexual abuse and of patriarchal belief systems. However, some of them return back as messengers journeying on the path of knowing and healing, messengers for other survivors of sexual abuse and for their patriarchal societies. Judith L. Herman states:

Most survivors seek the resolution of their traumatic experience within the confines of their personal lives. But a significant minority, as a result of the trauma, feels they are called upon to engage in a wider world. These survivors recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action. While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity, there is a way to transcend it, by making it a gift to others. The trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission.⁵⁴

A survivor of domestic violence, who is now an attorney in charge of domestic violence prosecutions, describes the importance of her own story as a gift to others:

⁵² Brown and Gilligan, 21.

⁵³ Marjorie H. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 13.

⁵⁴ Herman, 207.

I want women to have some sense of hope -- the days I felt there was no way out. I feel very much like that's part of my mission, part of why God didn't allow me to die in that marriage, so that I could talk openly and publicly -- and it's taken me so many years to be able to do it -- about having been battered.⁵⁵

Another survivor of incest, who runs workshops on sexual abuse for teenagers, describes her political stance:

I always use my first and last name when I talk about incest. It's a political statement for me. I don't have anything to be ashamed of. I don't have to be anonymous. Even though it could affect my life in some way, it shouldn't. It should affect his life. And the whole idea of the secret is perpetuated when I keep my name out of it. Incest doesn't need to be hidden. It needs the exact opposite. People need to come out and say, 'My name is so-and-so, this happened to me, and I'm angry about it.' Also, I'm a fairly well-adjusted person, and I make a good role model for the young people I work with. So speaking out and saying who I am is real important to me."⁵⁶

What is heard from these women is a sign of self and personal commitment that is well situated in the center of their knowing process; their self, mind, voice, and mission are integrated and growing together beyond their personal tragedy. The "survivor mission" takes many forms and purposes. Its core meaning for the survivor lies in the reconnection of the self to others and to communities; therefore, it becomes a critical force to create more just knowledge, relations, and communities.

Finally, the community itself is important. Without communities affirming and validating the stories of survivors of sexual abuse are not likely to transform their abuse. Making sense of the abuse and thereby transforming it into a source of knowledge and mission are not a solitary pursuit, but are interactional and co-constructed, like knowledge.⁵⁷ One of the major contributions made by the Belenky et al study is that

⁵⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁵⁶ Bass and Davis, 99.

⁵⁷ Nancy R. Goldberger, 15.

women's talk or dialogue, which has been devalued both in Western and Asian cultures, is emphasized as a powerful mode of learning.⁵⁸ "Real talk" grows out of "connection, and it cements connections," which creates an optimum setting in which thinking and feeling are nourished and mutual learning occurs.⁵⁹

In this respect, the epistemological categories presented by Belenky and her colleagues not only show the self, mind, and voice as socially constructed; the self, mind, and voice are also determined by the mode and quality of the dialogue the person lives with, since it is the most basic tool of learning. The silence position, for example, has its developmental context, which is often a family characterized by violence, hierarchy, and poor communication. Received knowers often come from families characterized by hierarchical, one-way communication in which men or adults are the speakers while women and children are the listeners. Like the "receivers," the subjective knowers tend to come from families whose pattern of dialogue is dominantly one-way. In that one-way dialogue system, however, the speaker and the listener are reversed: daughters speak to parents, for male authorities are often absent or untrustworthy by being physically or sexually abusive.

The procedural and the constructivist knowers share certain family backgrounds. Their childhood surroundings are more often characterized by mutuality in dialogue, especially between mothers and daughters, and by parental figures who integrate the voices of reason and emotions.⁶⁰ Thus, each way of knowing has a developmental

⁵⁸ Belenky et al., 114-20. See also Jill M. Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue: Collaborative Ways of Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*, eds. Nancy R. Goldberger et al., 284-85.

⁵⁹ Belenky et al., 116. See also Tarule, 285.

⁶⁰ Belenky et al., 155-89.

context in which it is usually fostered and shaped, and each developmental context is marked by a particular mode of dialogue whose quality influences knowing. Thus, to move beyond a given stage, a woman needs to be in “dialogue-rich communities” in which “voice, dialogue, relationships, and learning intersect.”⁶¹

This is certainly true of survivors of sexual abuse. To develop their voice, self, and mind, they need to be in dialogue-rich communities. Survivors who moved beyond the second stage in the Belenky et al. study were those who were “situated” in communities and had opportunities to converse and learn. Such “dialogue communities”⁶² may include social agencies, self-help groups, problem-solving groups, or relationships with a therapist, female peers, or family members.⁶³ The affirmation, empowerment, and knowledge created by dialogue communities can be critical for women’s transition to subjective knowing.⁶⁴

Likewise, the survivors in this study show how their resources interplay as social factors with their psychological need for healing, an interplay which facilitated their journey of knowing and thereby lifted their silence. As discussed in the first section of the study, none of the women kept their abuse experience in total secrecy even when they thought they suffered from their secrets. The need for speaking in these women gave birth to their whispers and sustained them for years before their coming out as survivors. Then, the women were motivated by their need for healing and wholeness to search for resources. The resources are those; books on the healing from sexual abuse [Kim],

⁶¹ Goldberger, 15. See also Tarule, 276.

⁶² Goldberger, 15.

⁶³ Belenky et al., 60.

⁶⁴ Belenky et al., 60.

women' study groups and related materials [Shim and Sung], and a crisis center and its support and care [Sook], as well as religious resources for all the women but Sook.

When exposed to such useful resources, the women had eye-opening experiences indicative of a leap in their journey of knowing, or a break through. As a result, they came out as survivors, transforming their abuse experience as victims into something useful for others and thereby something meaningful for themselves. It is important to note that silence and secrecy indicate the helpless self with few resources; a strong voice is equipped with resources and by the impulses of a growing self. In other words, harmful social factors such as stigma silence survivors in their journey of knowing while reinforcing their trauma. Reversely, social factors in forms of useful resources empower their journey in knowing and foster the transformation of their trauma into testimony.

As the social and psychological factors are inseparable in women's cognitive development, as studied by Belenky et al., so are they in the healing journey of sexual abuse survivors. In this respect, creating social contexts is crucial for healing sexual abuse survivors, - - contexts in which survivors' voice, dialogue, relationships, and learning intersect and, thereby, facilitate their journey of knowing and healing. This issue will introduce Birren and Deutchman's guided autobiography groups as a mode for learning and healing for sexual abuse survivors in the Korean context.

Voice and Survivor Groups: Guided Autobiography Groups for Sexual Abuse Survivors in the Korean Context

For the last two decades, feminist scholars have been committed to serious engagement with women's experience as a source of knowledge and to experiential and

non-hierarchical models for teaching, learning, healing, and theologizing.⁶⁵ In that context, concepts such as experience, voice, dialogue, self-in-relation, connected knowing, empathy, empowerment, critical thinking, and caring, etc. have emerged. Several of these concepts are central for developing a model for women's survivor groups, especially: Such a model is needed, for it is not yet available in Korea. They are: (1) women's experience, (2) self-in-relation, (3) dialogue, and (4) empowerment.

First, as discussed in the above section, women's experience has been excluded in the social construct of knowledge both in Western and Asian cultures; it needs to be claimed as a source of knowledge. For survivors of sexual abuse, their firsthand experience of sexual abuse is the major source of knowing, as well as healing. Survivor groups can serve as a community in which sexual abuse experience is taken seriously as a critical force for reconstructing knowledge, which is intimately related with their recovery from sexual abuse within patriarchal societies.

Second, women's need for connection to others previously has been devalued and mislabeled as women's "dependency." This needs to be claimed as a part of fundamental human nature and renamed as self-in-relation, where self emerges in the context of relationship and grows toward its greater ability for relatedness to others.⁶⁶ For survivors of sexual abuse, their relational self is that which has been doubly

⁶⁵ Tarule, 275. See also feminist theologians' works: Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boson, Ma.: Beacon Press, 1973); Carter Heyward, The Redemption of God: Toward a Theology of Mutual Relation (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1982); Maxine Glaz and Jeanne Moessner, eds., Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Valerie DeMarinis, Critical Caring: A Feminist Model for Pastoral Psychology (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

⁶⁶ Janet L. Surrey, "The 'Self-in-Relation': A Theory of Women's Development," in Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center, by Judith V. Jordan et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 51-66. See also Irene P. Stiver, "Work Inhibitions in Women," in Women's Growth in Connection, by Judith V. Jordan et al., 226.

traumatized by sexual abuse and social stigmas. The restoration of their relational self and social bonds begin with the discovery that one is not alone. “Nowhere is this experience more immediate, powerful, or convincing” than in a survivor group.⁶⁷ Judith

L. Herman succinctly states the role of survivor groups:

Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity. . . . Because traumatized people feel so alienated by their experience, survivor groups have a special place in the recovery process. Such groups afford a degree of support and understanding that is simply not available in the survivor’s ordinary social environment. The encounter with others who have undergone similar trials dissolves feelings of isolation, shame, and stigma.⁶⁸

Thirdly, although women’s talk has been devalued in both Western and Asian cultures, it is reclaimed as an important aspect of women’s knowing and thinking. Dialogue is the medium for connecting with others and thereby creating relationships; dialogue-rich relations with empathy are the way the self grows, learning occurs, and knowledge is constructed.⁶⁹ As mentioned earlier, to develop survivors’ voice, self, and mind, they need to be situated in dialogue-rich communities in which voice, dialogue, relationship, and learning intersect. Survivor groups can serve as one kind of such dialogue-rich communities.

Finally, women’s way of relating to others, which often appears “passive” or “inactive” is conceptualized as “power with” or “power together,” a power which sustains,

⁶⁷ Herman, 215.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 214-15.

⁶⁹ Tarule, 281. See also Judith V. Jordan, “Empathy and the Mother-Daughter Relationship,” in Women’s Growth in Connection, by Judith V. Jordan et al., 32.

deepens, and empowers relationships.⁷⁰ Thus, empowerment replaces the traditional notion of power as domination; “power over” is replaced with the feminist concept of relatedness, that is “power with.”⁷¹ For survivors of sexual abuse who experienced power as domination and control in their sexual abuse, a mutual power model rooted in their relational self is an antidote to their abuse. Survivor groups can serve as a community where mutual empathy and mutual empowerment are encouraged and facilitated based on similar trials of the participants.

In an ideal sense, women survivors groups would embody perfectly integrated feminist visions of knowing and healing. On the basis of such feminist spirit, I suggest the form of guided autobiography as the structure of survivor groups. James Birren and Donna Deutchman developed a model of guided autobiography for older adults, a model whereby older adults are guided to review their life stories and share them with others in a group in order to integrate their life experiences.⁷² Birren and Deutchman state: “We believe that autobiography is most fruitful for older adults when done as part of a guided process that directs attention to major life themes and when shared in a group.”⁷³ Guided autobiography is based on the conviction that certain themes elicit the most powerful memories and are then most relevant to the issues and needs of older adults. The authors provided nine major life themes along with two extra topics and sensitizing questions.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Janet L. Surrey, “The ‘Self-in-Relation’: A Theory of Women’s Development,” in Women’s Growth in Connection, by Judith V. Jordan et al., 164-65.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁷² James E. Birren and Donna E. Deutchman, Guiding Autobiography Groups for Older Adults: Exploring the Fabric of Life (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 67-79. Nine life themes are: the major branching points in your life; your family; your major life work or career; the role of money in your life; your health and body image; your sexual identity,

According to each theme, older adults review their life experiences, write a two-page life story, read this life story in a group, and share feelings and thoughts with group members.

I will follow the format developed by Birren and Deutchman but suggest different life themes and sensitizing questions for Korean sexual abuse survivors.⁷⁵ These ten life themes and sensitizing questions will help survivors develop their voice, dialogue, relationship and mutual empowerment. Leading a guided autobiography group for sexual abuse survivors is dealt with in relation to pastoral responses in the final section in the next chapter.

Why Autobiography Groups for Survivors of Sexual Abuse?

Survivors have a strong need to integrate their life stories since they have suffered from the “don’t tell” rule about sexual abuse. They feel divided deep in their being as long as they feel shame about part of their life experiences, seal them in deep secrecy, and isolate them from their “normal” stories about who they are. Without integration between what is and is not open for discussion about themselves, a sense of wholeness cannot be achieved. Looking back on their life experiences in general and those of sexual abuse in particular, and putting those experiences into words are a significant, first step for survivors to integrate their lives and heal their sexual abuse trauma.

Why Themes and Sensitizing Questions?

Survivors of sexual abuse as a group are distinguished from other people by their experience of sexual abuse. They share certain commonality based on the impact and

sex roles, and sexual experiences; your experiences with death or your ideas about death; your loves and hates; and the meaning of your life, and your aspirations and life goals.

⁷⁵ I am indebted to Dr. William Clements for the insight that a model of guided autobiography groups might well serve as a social context in which survivors share their stories and thereby relate to one another in terms of learning and healing.

consequences of sexual abuse that occurred in their lives. Themes based on their shared struggles and needs are best suited for the group process for two reasons. First, they can elicit not only the most salient memories but also those avoided and suppressed because of overwhelming threats to their self-images. Second, themes based on their experiences serve to integrate their divided memories and develop a sense of wholeness of their self-images. Thus, themes based on the real experiences of sexual abuse survivors are necessary for eliciting memories, both the normal and the unspeakable, and integrating life experiences.

In addition, questions are suggested to make each theme concrete in an autobiographical process. They guide each participant to feel safe with each theme, since they provide boundaries as well as sensitize her to potential issues. This may facilitate further memories.

Ten themes are relevant. Three of the ten are general life themes: dreams, family, and death. These themes serve to set the stage for other specific themes that need to be anchored in the common context of life. Seven themes are specifically related to sexual abuse: incidents of sexual abuse, symptoms, virginity, secrecy, intimacy, God, and other survivors of sexual abuse. The interviewed sexual abuse survivors struggled with these themes or were concerned about them. Thus, these themes serve to put experiences of sexual abuse into perspective. The themes are ordered according to how difficult it is to talk about them. General themes are placed at the beginning or near the end of the autobiographical process; they frame the more sensitive themes related to the trauma of sexual abuse. The ten themes are as follows:

1. Your Dreams
2. Your Family

3. Virginity: The Cultural Value
4. Your Experiences with Secrecy and Isolation
5. Let Your Symptoms Be Told
6. Let Your Trauma Story Be Heard
7. Intimacy: Your Need and Fear
8. Your Experiences with Death or Your Ideas about Death
9. God in Your Life
10. The Survivor Mission: Your Hopes for Yourself, Other Survivors, and Succeeding Generations.

Themes and Sensitizing Questions

Your Dreams. What is a dream? It is what we envision about ourselves and our lives. It is a positive wish providing a guide and focus for our lives. We are where we are today because of the many dreams we have had and pursued. Some of our dreams are only flickering memories and some have become our life goals.

What have your dreams been? How have they shaped you and been shaped by you?

1. Do you remember when you had many wishes and dreams in your childhood? What were your little dreams? What were your big dreams?
2. Who were the people who inspired your dreams in your childhood? Your father, mother, teacher, pastor, Sunday School teacher, or yourself alone?
3. Who were your heroes and heroines? Were they fictional or real? Why did you idealize them? In what ways did you try to imitate them or turn to them for empowerment during times of difficulty in your childhood?
4. What characteristics of your childhood heroes, do you find in yourself now?
5. Have your wishes and dreams changed over time? What were your dreams in your adolescence? What was the life goal you envisioned at that time? Why?
6. Was it difficult for you as an adolescent to project your dreams into future? If so, why?

7. What were your dreams in your young and middle adulthood years? What major life work have you embarked on as an adult? If you do not have a major life work yet, what would you like to do? Why?
8. In what ways have your culture and gender been influential factors for shaping and reshaping your dreams? What other factors contributed to changes in your dreams and life goals in your adult period?
9. If your dreams have changed dramatically over time, how do you feel about it? What emotions do you experience as you think about dreams which you had but have never realized? What insights come to you when you see your life continue to evolve beyond your original dreams?
10. Have you begun to dream and hope again? If so, what are your new dreams and hopes?

Your Family.⁷⁶ What is your family? The history of your family includes your family of origin and of adulthood. It includes your grandparents, parents, siblings, uncles and aunts as well as your spouse, children and grandchildren.

You need not identify all your family members, only those important in shaping your life. Some have been more important in positive ways and some in negative ways. Which family members have had a major impact in shaping your life? Why? What would another person have to know about your family in order to understand you and how you've come to be the person you are?

1. Who held the power in your family? Why? Who made the decisions? How did you know?
2. Who offered support, warmth, and nurture? Why? Who did you go to for comfort? Who did you confide in?
3. Did you like your family? Why or why not?
4. What was best about your family? Worst about it? What were the strengths and weaknesses in you family?

⁷⁶ Birren and Deutchman, 69-70. Reprinted by permission of Johns Hopkins University Press (copyright © 1991 by Birren and Deutchman).

5. Was there anyone in your family you were afraid of? Why?
6. Who were the heroes in your family? The family favorites? How did you know?
7. What was the feeling or tone of your family (e.g., happy, sad, crowded, spacious, noisy, quiet, warm, cold)?
8. What were the major areas of conflict, problems, and issues in your family?
9. What were the rules in your family, the 'shoulds' and 'oughts'?
10. What events and experiences have torn your family apart or made your family stronger?

Virginity, the Cultural Value. Throughout the centuries Korean culture has placed great importance upon female virginity. The cultural teaching, 'you shall die if you lose your virginity before marriage,' is still influential in many ways, though not believed literally any more, in Korean society.

As a survivor of sexual abuse, how have you been affected by the standard of female virginity or chastity? What has been its impact on your self-image? How have you dealt with it?

1. What was your model of the 'true woman' or the 'ideal' woman when you were growing up?
2. How early did you hear about the importance of virginity? Who taught it to you?
3. What stories did you hear about women who lost their virginity? What did you know about the loss of virginity and its meaning for women? Who taught you about it? A teacher? A friend? A book? A magazine? A movie?
4. When did you first realize that virginity was expected of women as the condition for marriage? What emotions did you experience at that time if you were a survivor of childhood sexual abuse?
5. How did you feel about yourself and your future? Was it shock? Despair? A sense of being nobody? No place in society?

6. If you have felt judged and stigmatized by your culture since you were sexually abused, how have you coped?
7. Was there a time when you acted out according to the cultural attitude toward sexually abused women? If so, in what ways? Did you attempt suicide? Did you begin to be promiscuous since you didn't see any value in yourself?
8. How did you attempt to compensate for the loss of your virginity or chastity? Did you begin to be a perfectionist, or a workaholic? Were you driven to a career or a series of careers to prove your personal worth?
9. Were there any turning points in your life? What persons, experiences, events, and books helped you turn the corner and see yourself and the world differently? Was the turning point intertwined with your spiritual journey? How?
10. How do you feel about yourself in relation to your culture? As a victim? A survivor? A challenger? Or a budding revolutionary?

Your Experiences with Secrecy and Isolation. Unlike natural disasters, sexual abuse tends to evoke secrecy since it is not simply a traumatic event but is also thought of as sex in Korean culture. For many reasons, secrecy is a common way of dealing with the experience of sexual abuse. It can be both self-protective and self-defeating.

How have you dealt with the aftermath of sexual abuse? How has your ownership of your trauma story changed over time?

1. How did your family talk? What were the rules of speaking, the "tell" and the "tell not," in your family? What were the taboo subjects? How was sex talked about and treated in your family?
2. Did your family value telling the truth in spite of losing face? How were you encouraged to tell the truth in your family? Did you have a role model for telling the truth outside of your family?
3. How did your up-bringing affect your later ability to cope with sexual abuse? Is there any parallel between your family's way of speaking and your dealing with your sexual abuse experience?

4. How did you cope with the sexual abuse? Did you let your family or significant others know about what happened to you? Who did you go to and confide in for support and care? How were you helped or not?
5. Did you prefer to keep the abuse to yourself? Why? What were pressures and fears that led you to be silent at that time? How long did you keep the sexual abuse a secret?
6. If secrecy has been part of your life more or less as a result of the sexual abuse, what was it like to live with secret? Did you feel different from others? Did you feel special and more mature? Did you feel less real, less authentic? Have you had a dual image of yourself? If so, how?
7. What was the role of secrecy in your life? How did it help you? How did it limit you? In what ways did you experience secrecy as a self-protection? In what ways was it a self-imposed prison or a curse that led to shallow relationships?
8. If you feel that you no longer need the protect of secrecy, what brought you to this stance? Your age? Your personal growth and confidence? Your critical view of the culture? Your ability to claim justice? How have you come to own your trauma story?
9. If you broke the silence and began to talk about your sexual abuse experience, what did you learn from your experience of telling the truth? What was a life-long lesson you got from the experience? Was your self-esteem affected by your telling the truth? Was your view of others also changed? How?
10. Is there some wisdom to take into account for telling the truth? When is secrecy necessary as your choice?

Let Your Symptoms Be Told. What are the symptoms of sexual abuse? They are what you still suffer as the result of sexual abuse. You may carry the impact of sexual abuse in the form of your body memories such as startling responses, hypervigilance, avoidance, nightmares, emotional flashbacks, body pains, and numbness. You may carry the impact of sexual abuse in the form of your negative perceptions and emotions, such as difficulties seeing yourself as positive, others as trustworthy, and the future as hopeful. In addition, you may suffer from a lack of intimacy, finding yourself either isolated or abused in intimate relationships.

It is important to know that symptoms are initially adaptive responses to the event of sexual abuse. You survived the sexual abuse by changing your sensory and emotional responses when you could not stop the violence. The problem is that they persist into your current life and now may be maladaptive to your life of safety and security.

1. Have you changed or felt different from others since you were sexually abused? If so, how?
2. Have you had any psychological distress since you were abused? How did you become aware of the symptoms?
3. What symptoms have you suffered most often? In what ways? Have the symptoms changed over time?
4. Are there any symptoms you have been unaware of until recently? How did you come to identify and name them?
5. What are your feelings and emotions when you realized that what you thought of as your character is actually a symptom of sexual abuse? Sad? Angry? Released?
6. What are resources you have used to cope with your symptoms and problems? Books, music, journals, prayers, pets, friends, pastors, counselors, support groups? What else? In what ways have you been helped or not?
7. Have there been turning points or “eye-opening experiences” in your dealing with your symptoms or perceiving your problems? What persons, events, experiences, and beliefs precipitated and facilitated the healing moments?
8. Are there symptoms or problems you suffered once but now have overcome or are in your control? What have you learned from your experiences that you want to share with others?
9. What symptoms now stand in the way of your growth and healing? What did you try to overcome but are not yet free?
10. What are your inner strengths and assets that have sustained you and helped you keep moving ahead in your life?

Let Your Trauma Story Be Heard. What is sexual abuse? It is any experience in which you feel used sexually. It includes many overt and covert situations in which you

are exposed, for example, to pornographic materials, fondling, digital penetration of the vagina, and intercourse. While abusive sexual contact varies along a continuum of intrusiveness, one of the salient characteristics of sexual abuse is 'secrecy,' since the sexual partner involved is "inappropriate" for you in terms of age, power, consent contract, and blood and emotional ties.

What has been the history of your sexual abuse experience in your life? How have your experiences of sexual abuse affected your life and your character?

It may hurt for you to remember sexually traumatic incidents you have experienced. If you feel overwhelmed and panicked when you try to recall your experiences, stop until you feel calm and safe again. You are free to skip any items that make you too uncomfortable.

1. Were there any traumatic sexual experiences in your life? Place your experiences of sexual abuse along a time line. A sexual abuse experience early in life may increase a woman's risk for revictimization. If this is your case, identify each sexual abuse experience and reflect on it in the following way.
2. How old were you when the sexual abuse occurred?
3. What were the feelings, the emotions you experienced at the time the abuse occurred (e.g., shock, fear, confusion, helplessness, shame)?
4. Was the sexual abuse a single incident or a repeated experience? If repeated, how long and often did it occur? What were physical consequences (e.g., physical injury, venereal disease, and pregnancy)?
5. Who was(were) the abuser(s)? Stranger? Acquaintance? One of your family members? Have you ever confronted the abuser(s)? Why or why not?
6. If you confronted the abuser, was it a healing experience for you? How? What lesson did you learn from your confrontation with the abuser?
7. What are your feelings about the abuser(s) now? Do you have strong unexpressed feelings of anger toward the abuser(s)? How do you deal with your anger?

8. How did the sexual abuse affect your view of yourself? What were your feelings about yourself? Dirty, damaged, unworthy, or shame-bound? Did you have strong unexpressed feelings of hatred toward yourself for being a victim of sexual abuse? How have your feelings about yourself changed over time?
9. How did the sexual abuse affect your life? Have you ever attempted suicide or wished to die? Have you been promiscuous as a result of sexual abuse? Or have you been driven to self-protection to the point that you isolate yourself from people? What were and still are the major areas of problems in your life as the result of sexual abuse?
10. Looking back, what has given you strength to survive all the destructiveness of sexual abuse? What have been your resources (e.g., your family, your religion, feminist writings, women's groups, therapy)?

Intimacy: Your Need and Fear. What is intimacy? It is an emotional bonding that gives a close, innermost quality to relationships. An idea, one's work, and a pet as well as a person can be the object of intimacy. A major form of intimacy in adulthood happens when we fall in love and make commitments to a particular person with whom we wish to share life together. For some, intimacy can be avoided as much as longed for. Fear of intimacy is a painful feeling of anxiety that causes one to stand apart from people, especially those who are potentially intimate partners. Whatever the reason, absence of intimacy causes distress in the form of emptiness, loneliness, anxiety, and longing.

What have been the major intimacies of your life? What have been the major fears or difficulties with regard to intimacy in your life?

1. Who was the person you loved the most as a child? How was your love appreciated and accepted?
2. What were you taught about love when you were growing up? How was the "ideal" love relationship between two people portrayed?
3. Who was your first love or most serious love outside your family? When and in what situations?
4. What were your loves like? Fulfilling? Promising but not fulfilling? Fulfilling but losing yourself in some way? Why?

5. How has love disappointed you in life? How has this affected you?
6. If you have been sexually abused, how has the experience affected your ability to be intimate in relationships?
7. What were the major fears or difficulties that you faced before and after you entered intimate relationships? From what feelings did you suffer the most in intimate relationships as the result of sexual abuse?
8. Did you find yourself more often than not caught up in a dilemma as if you had only two choices in life, --- to be safe by isolation or to be abused in intimate relationships? If so, how did you come to this dilemma? What was its realistic and unrealistic aspects? Have you begun to resolve this dilemma? How?
9. Have you ever transformed your unfulfilling intimacy with people into other forms of intimacy such as art, social activities, spiritual experiences, etc.? In what area have you found that your love and being was appreciated and accepted with gratitude and joy? Where have you found the most love and appreciation?
10. What have been your major intimacies in life in spite of the impact of sexual abuse? What traditional beliefs about love have been challenged and what new truths have you discovered?

Your Experiences with Death or Your Ideas about Death.⁷⁷ Death can affect your

life in many ways. The loss of a beloved pet as a child can be quite powerful. The death of parents, grandparents, friends, a spouse, a child, a brother or a sister, or a mentor all can affect you profoundly.

How have your experiences with death affected your life and your character? How have your reactions to death changed over the years? How have your ideas concerning your own death changed?

1. How did you learn about death as a child? Did you ever lose a pet that was like a member of the family? What did you think or feel when your pet died?

⁷⁷ Birren and Deutchman, 74-5. Reprinted by permission of Johns Hopkins University Press (copyright © 1991 by Birren and Deutchman).

2. How was death talked about and treated in your family? Did it mystify you? Frighten you? Did your feelings or ideas about death seem to be different from other people you knew? How?
3. When did you go to your first funeral? How did it feel to you? How did you react? Did you talk to anyone about your experience? Who?
4. Were you ever so sick or injured that you thought you might die? Did this change your life? Why or why not?
5. What have been your close calls with death? Have your ideas about your own death changed over the decades? How do you feel about your death now?
6. Have you ever wanted to die? What did you do about those feelings?
7. How has the death of a friend or family member through suicide impacted your life?
8. Do you feel guilty about anyone's death? Helpless? Angry? Resentful? Abandoned? Have you ever felt responsible for anyone's death?
9. What kind of death would you like to have?
10. What was the most significant death you have experienced? How did it change you or your life? What impact does it have on your spirituality?

God in Your Life. The religious aspects of our lives are sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle. Religion can be simply absent for some people; for others it may play a central role in life. God may be a distant religious figure, the object of worship, or God may be a person in intimate relationship in personal faith. Even when in intimate relationships with God, our knowing about and relating to God is always in process rather than static. What we believe about God affects what we experience; what we experience in our daily lives also affects what we believe about God. God in our lives is always in journey with us.

What have been your relationships with God? How have they changed over time?

1. Were there any religious traditions in your home as a child? What symbols were significant for you as a child?

2. Were there any episodes or rituals that may epitomize your relationship with God? How did you conceive of God? A provider? A protector? A comforter? A watcher? A punisher? A friend? How did you experience God when you were a child?
3. Are there continuing primary metaphors or feelings about God that you have experienced in your life? What are they?
4. Have you ever had a religious experience? When? Where? How was your relationship with God changed in that experience?
5. If sexual abuse happened in your life, was it a time of crisis in your faith in God? How? In what ways was your faith in God a helpful resource or a roadblock in your dealing with the sexual abuse?
6. How was God experienced deep down in you when you were sexually abused and subsequently neglected in society? Absent? Distant? Uncaring? Abandoning? Punishing? If so, how did it affect your spiritual life?
7. What beliefs in God were shattered or at stake? How long? Was it a dark period in your relationship with God? In what way?
8. If you got out of the dark period or if you took a different course although not without agonies, what helped you? What persons, experiences, thoughts, beliefs, and books contributed to your restoration to God?
9. How is God on your side in your new relationship with God? Have you ever claimed that God is angry about sexual abuse, abusers, and the belief systems that support it? Have you ever felt God's anger in your own anger about what happened to you? Have you ever heard God's voice in your own voice? How has your new relationship with God empowered you?
10. Where is God in your journey of healing from sexual abuse? Is God still absent, distant, foggy in your journey? Are you having trouble identifying who your God is?

Survivor Mission: Your Hope for Survivors and Next Generations. What is a survivor mission? It is a felt accountability for other sufferers because of your personal experience of tragedy. You may have deeper understanding than others about victims of sexual abuse, since your personal tragedy is a source of knowledge about such predicaments.

You may have just begun your journey of healing from sexual abuse. You may have gone far down the road to recovery. Or, you may have begun to work on growth at a deeper level. Regardless of where you are, you may be genuinely motivated to know about and connect with other survivors of human violence because of the pain and agony you share. This is a budding sense of your survivor mission. You want to understand and take care of each other.

1. When did you first hear about other survivors of sexual abuse? What were your feelings and emotions at that time?
2. Have you ever met any other survivors before now? If so, what brought you together? Did you feel connected with them? How?
3. What was your strongest impressions from such encounters? What social myths were challenged? What truths dawned on you? What made you feel normal again?
4. Have you ever listened to other survivors' stories of sexual abuse? If so, how did you feel when you listened to them? More angry than them? More sad than them? Why?
5. Did you feel more open to your own experiences, more in touch with your own pains and anger in your life? How did you deal with your feelings?
6. What did you learn from the life experiences of other survivors? What traditional virtues for women were challenged? What new virtues occurred to you? What impact did the stories of other survivors have on your life? Was it a turning point to listen to them? If so, how?
7. How might your personal tragedy be useful source to other survivors? What role do you want to do for them?
8. What are your hopes and inspirations for yourself, other survivors, and succeeding generations? Are they also God's hope and passion?
9. How do you want to celebrate your survivorhood? With whom in your personal, social, and spiritual lives?
10. Where is your life going now?

CHAPTER 6

Pastoral Theological and Care Issues Related to Survivors of Sexual Abuse

In this chapter I examine theological and pastoral issues in Christian traditions in relation to the experiences of sexual abuse survivors. In order to be useful resources, religious beliefs as well as the cultural need to be put in a context, in this case, the context of the experiences of Korean female survivors of sexual abuse. For the purpose, I will be first concerned with criteria for assessing theological notions and metaphors and, then, critically examine them using the criteria: To see if they are useful resources, affirming and empowering the survivors' struggles, or a weapon against them. With this basis, I will explore pastoral ways of empowering sexual abuse survivors, paying particular attention to a Korean pastoral tradition relevant to the survivors' struggles for life and justice.

From the Eyes of Sexual Abuse Survivors

The process of theological thinking, like any critical thought, is dialectical. Received symbols and beliefs about God affect the way we perceive and experience life. The reverse is also true: What we experience effects how we envision and what we believe about God. The religious confusion and spiritual cries, discussed in the spirituality section of Chapter 4, indicate the collision between what is believed on the one hand and what is experienced on the other hand in the survivors' two-way process of theological thinking. There is a sharp conflict, for example, between the belief in God as all-powerful and all-good and the experience of being the victim of sexual abuse, neglected and condemned by society. The survivors interviewed were more or less inclined, when in conflict, to accommodate their abuse experience to their received theological knowledge. As a result, their personal experience was at risk of becoming secondary to their received theological knowledge.

Conflicts resolved by ignoring personal experience tended to be in favor of received theological doctrine, which was privileged over their direct personal experience. I start from their abuse experience in order to lay down criteria to evaluate and extend theological notions, notions of God and Jesus' suffering, which were at the heart of the survivors' spiritual crisis as shown in Chapter 4.

On the basis of the description of the suffering experienced by sexual abuse survivors in Chapter 4, I define the reality of sexual abuse as a three-fold experience. It is the experience of: (1) violence, (2) a variety of physical, psychological and spiritual distresses, and (3) secrecy and isolation. I would like to rename each experience as (1) "power over," (2) "ill-being," and (3) invisibility.

The mode of power which is involved in sexual abuse is that of "power over."¹ The use of the word "over" implies manipulation, control, domination and coercion.² "Power over" is at the core of abusive relationships in that it is by nature one-way, unequal, exploitative and rules out. "Power with" or "power together" is distinguished from "power-over" by its connecting, enabling, and affirming character.³ The use of the word "with" or "together" implies a bond, mutuality and empowerment which are characteristic of all growth-enhancing relationships, especially those of a reciprocal, empathetic, nurturing, and valuing nature. The distinction between "power-over" and "power with"

¹ The question, "Power for what?" is useful for differentiating the two modes of power, "power over" and "power with." See Jean Baker Miller, "Women and Power," in *Women's Growth in Connection*, by Judith V. Jordan et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 199.

² Kathryn Guthrie, "Models of God: Empowerment, Intimacy, Hope," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 47, no. 1 (1993): 27. See Pamela Cooper-White, "Power and Violence against Women," in *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), esp. 33-40. See also Janet L. Surrey, "Relationship and Empowerment," 165.

³ Guthrie, 27.

becomes a criterion for images of God, since survivors of sexual abuse search for a God who is not like their abusers who dominate them, nor society which is identified with the powerful. For survivors of sexual abuse, it is helpful to think of God as one who is present as a “power with,” not a “power-over.”

“Ill-being” is also at the core of a sexual abuse experience. “Ill-being” implies that the impact of “power-over” is a gestalt which is more than the sum of the individual symptoms. A multi-dimensional destructiveness of “power-over” converges at one point and becomes a gestalt force which directs itself against a person’s being and life itself. “Ill-being” is at the heart of all abusive relationships in which power is used, not to foster the full development of human life, but to deny and distort it. By the same token, “well-being” implies an essential, gestalt outcome of all growth-enhancing relationships in which life is valued and nurtured. The distinction between “ill-being” and “well-being” becomes a criterion for sin, since survivors of sexual abuse search for a Christian notion which speaks to their ill-being in such a way that it challenges violence. For survivors of sexual abuse, it is helpful to think of sin as violence, the source of “ill-being,” which is ultimately against the source of all life and well-being, that is, God.⁴

Finally, invisibility is the hallmark of a sexual abuse experience. Invisibility runs through the entire reality of sexual abuse: the sexual assault, the abuser, the victim, the victim’s suffering, and the context in which abuse occurs. The invisibility of sexual abuse is no less traumatic than the sexual assault itself. Such invisibility implies that the frame of reference involved is not one for the victim but for the perpetrators who are in the position of “power-over,” a reference with which the abuse of power is alarmingly tolerated.

⁴ See Marjorie H. Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

Making the victim's "ill-being" visible and naming its cause is the first step toward a clear ethical stand against violence, as well as toward healing in the individual and at the societal level. Thus, the question of whether the victim's suffering is visible or not becomes a criterion for the meaning of Jesus' suffering as well as notions of God and sin. Survivors of sexual abuse search for a theological notion of suffering which helps them name sexual abuse, confront its source and find a meaning not in suffering but in liberation from suffering. For survivors of sexual abuse, it is helpful to think of Jesus as one who challenged many sources of "ill-being" in his time and whose commitment to life and justice, not suffering itself, was salvific.

Thus, the criteria for assessing theological notions and metaphors which are helpful to sexual abuse survivors are:

- (1) those which reflect the belief that God is a "power with" rather than a "power-over;"
- (2) those which reflect the belief that sin is violence, both physical and non-physical, which causes the "ill-being;"
- (3) those which reflect the belief that Jesus' suffering is the very critical source against suffering, and his commitment to life and justice is the locus of God's salvific power.

Received Theological Knowledge from the Perspective of Survivors

According to Sallie McFague, a model of God consists of two components which are interrelated -- a metaphor and a concept.⁵ In McFague's view, a metaphor is primary, picturing certain aspects of the relationship between God and the world. From a metaphor, a concept is elucidated, centering on the metaphor's implications. Thus, metaphors flesh

⁵ Sallie McFague, Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988).

out concepts with imaginations and feelings, while the latter discipline the former. A metaphor for God without its conceptual implications is less meaningful, and a concept of God lacking its imaginative power is “sterile.”⁶ In this section, we will explore three models of God in relation to the religious experience of survivors. These are models of: monarchical God, suffering God, and atoning savior Jesus Christ.

Monarchical God

While images and roles of God are more complex in the Bible than in theological tradition, a dominant model of God in mainstream Christianity, both in the Western and Korean context, is that of kingship as an expression of God’s sovereignty.⁷ Ian G. Barbour states:

The monarchical model of God as King was developed systematically, both in Jewish thought (God as Lord and King of the Universe), in medieval Christian thought (with its emphasis on divine omnipotence), and in the Reformation (especially in Calvin’s insistence on God’s sovereignty). In the portrayal of God’s relation to the world, the dominant western historical model has been that of the absolute monarch ruling over his kingdom.⁸

In the monarchical model of God, whose royal symbol has been “never abandoned” in Christian tradition,⁹ metaphors come predominantly from images of male authority such as king, lord, ruler, patriarch, master, and father; concepts, such as omnipotence,

⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁷ Burton Z. Cooper, *Why, God?* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1988), 45-64. See Rosemary R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 47-71. See also James N. Poling, *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 153-82.

⁸ Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 156, cited in McFague, 63.

⁹ Edward Farley and Peter Hodgson, “Scripture and Tradition,” in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds. Peter Hodgson and Robert King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

sovereignty, and invulnerability, primarily centering on power.¹⁰ In this respect, it is hard to deny that male experiences of power are at the heart of Christian models of God, regardless of whether or not they express God's love or justice. The problem is not in the male image of God with power itself, since it reflects a historical context of patriarchy in which Christianity was fostered and shaped and in which male experiences and needs were seen as normative to serve as a lens with which to envision God. The problem is when such a model is taken as the only way of understanding God, pretending to the "status of definitions of God."¹¹ The implications of using the model in such a way are destructive to the Christian community as well as to women, in that the model excludes new possibilities for relating to God, and, furthermore, is trapped into idolatry by becoming a false God of the patriarchal tradition.

A major criticism of the use of the monarchical model of God concerns its inherent dualism of hierarchy and exclusivism. In the monarchical image, God is essentially different from the world and apart from it; God relates to the world externally and controls it through domination and benevolence; all power, either as domination or as benevolence, is on God's side,¹² and all passivity, either as gratitude or as fear, is on the creature's side; and "God can be God" only if the world is "nothing."¹³ For sexual abuse survivors, one of the implications of the monarchical model of God is that the image of God is dangerously close to the image of the perpetrator. A clear parallel exists between the two in terms of

¹⁰ See "God," and "Creation and Providence," in *Readings in Christian Theology*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 60-71, 118-28.

¹¹ McFague, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 64.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 64.

gender image, ways of interaction, and the nature and use of the power involved, although surely on a metaphorical level. And the worldly side in the dualism of the monarchical model of God is inevitably similar to the victim of sexual abuse in terms of passivity, vulnerability, and expendability, bringing to mind one of Mary Daly's remark; "The qualities that Christianity idealizes, especially for women, are also those of a victim."¹⁴ Thus, in the use of the monarchical model, the dynamics between the perpetrator and the victim are not only justified but extend seamlessly to the universe in relation to God. In this respect, the worship of the monarchical God is not likely to enhance the personal power of sexual abuse survivors but is much more likely to encourage passivity and conformity which carry with them a high risk of revictimization. In addition, worship of the monarchical God renders, at the foundational level of the imagination, the powerful more powerful and the powerless more powerless through the very difference in power between the divine and human relationship.¹⁵ Christianity has been a primary force in justifying the power difference between genders as the natural order of creation. This concept of power difference is now in our times renamed sexism, which is at the very heart of sexual abuse.

The criticism directed against the dichotomous character of the monarchical model may be put in juxtaposition to human suffering. The monarchical model of God has three major limitations: God is distant from the world, with little internal, intrinsic involvement (a non-relational God); God attends only to the human dimension of the world, having no concern for the non-human world (an anthropocentric God); and God controls the world

¹⁴ Daly, 77.

¹⁵ Carter Heyward, *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality, and Liberation* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1984), 124, 215.

through domination and benevolence -- domination which encourages aggressive attitudes, and benevolence which encourages passive attitudes (a controlling God).¹⁶ In the monarchical construct, God is pictured as one who knows the world but is not personally involved in suffering in the world; God controls the creation but is not responsible for evil since it is caused by sin; nor does this God seem to name sin, from the viewpoint of women, even when the human sphere is much concerned with God. The monarchical model of God is not only outmoded in terms of its metaphors but is also hurtful in terms of its conceptual implications for survivors of sexual abuse: God cannot reach out to the one who suffers, because of the very nature of God's divinity.

Such a conceptual implication is hurtful when posited against the image of almighty God. The image of God as all-knowing and all-controlling¹⁷ generates the corollary question: Why does God "allow" rape or incest at all, and all the attendant suffering? This question causes the vulnerable survivor more pain, but God is too divine to reach out to the cries, according to the monarchical model. Possibly, the survivor is not only overwhelmed with the question but deeply hurt, feeling ignored when she is most in need. The question of "why" faced all the Christian survivors in this study and caused spiritual crisis. Marie Fortune states:

[In explanations given by some victims] God is held responsible for the suffering itself. This presupposes a belief in God as omnipotent and omniscient. If God is in control and choosing to exercise that control by bringing suffering upon the afflicted as punishment or in order to teach them something, then both cause and meaning are

¹⁶ McFague, 65-9.

¹⁷ John Calvin states: "Therefore we must prove God so attends to the regulation of individual events, and they all so proceed from his set plan, that nothing takes place by chance." See Calvin, "God's Providence Governs All," in *Readings in Christian Theology*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, 126.

clearly determined to be in God's hands.¹⁸

In the cases of the Korean survivors I interviewed, they felt that God is ultimately responsible for both the cause and the meaning of their suffering because of God's omnipotence. Thus, it came as no surprise that survivors, whose God controls the world through benevolence or punishment,¹⁹ arrived at either God-blame or self-blame at the end of the battle concerning "why."²⁰ The monarchical model of God is a painful trap from which they can find no escape. They are utterly caught between God-blame and self-blame. For the survivor in such a trap, it may be of little help to remind her of the perpetrator as the cause of suffering, since she is bewildered not in logic but in faith. Unlike theologians who could reconcile contradictory concepts, survivors might not be so able: within their faith, logic and experience, they cannot understand these contradictions.²¹ Out of their faith, they cry out to God, "Why?" They may be disturbed, in their monarchical model of God, to know that God is remote and unresponsive, even when survivors turn to God in their agony.

Suffering God

One response to the problems of monarchical models of God is the model of a suffering God. Contemporary theologians have begun to respond to the issue of violence

¹⁸ Marie F. Fortune, "The Transformation of Suffering: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, eds. Joanne C. Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 144.

¹⁹ See Calvin, "God's Providence Governs All," 127.

²⁰ Fortune, "Transformation of Suffering," 140.

²¹ John Calvin and Karl Barth, for example, had little problem affirming human freedom in its fullest sense when they held God's sovereignty. "In logic, they admit, there is a contradiction, but 'in faith' they experience the compatibility of the two notions. (Barth, *Dogmatics*, 3/3, 147, 182-84)." Cited in Cooper, 22-3.

and suffering from such diverse standpoints as race, gender, class, and ecological survival. Such current issues demand that Christian faith answer the question of what belief in God's goodness means in our times. In such a vein, God's power is revised as the "power-with" that is intrinsically relational and empowering, rather than the "power-over" that is externally intervening and controlling. God's love is understood as "suffering with," rather than "giving benevolence to." God cannot suffer with creation without openness to all reality and without love for all creation. Thus, an understanding of God, different from the traditional one, has developed.²² The following quotations, from political and process theological writings, show a shift in the understanding of God in twentieth-century theology, although in a partial and limited way.

[A] God who cannot suffer is poorer than any man. For a God who is incapable of suffering is a being who cannot be involved. Suffering and injustice do not affect him. And because he is so completely insensitive, he cannot be affected or shaken by anything. He cannot weep, for he has no tears. But the one who cannot suffer cannot love either. So he is also a loveless being. . . . But a man can suffer because he can love, even as a Narcissus and he always suffers only to the degree that he loves. If he kills all love in himself, he no longer suffers. He becomes apathetic. But in that case is he a God? Is he not rather a stone?²³

God must be open to an adventure with the world. . . . The creation story can be read not as a pure act of omnipotence but as an act of creative love bringing into being that which will not be absolutely controlled. . . . To create a spiritual being in the divine image of God is a risk for the creatures and for God. . . . God makes God's self vulnerable to what humanity does, suffers from it, and brings new good out of the risk of freedom to create or in creating a new community of love and justice.²⁴

The primary tenet of process thought is that creativity is the supreme value, which requires the various contributions of God and the world for it to happen. God is co-creative with the world because he can do no other; it is the nature of the process

²² Cooper, 17-37.

²³ Jurgen Moltmann, The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 222.

²⁴ Daniel Day Williams, The Demonic and the Divine, ed. Stacy A. Evans (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 39-40.

that he should have a restricted freedom and be involved in suffering; all is subservient to the creative advance toward fuller value. . . . I shall be rooting God's limitation and suffering firmly in his own will as a creator who offers real freedom to his creation.²⁵

The emergence of the notion that God suffers what the world suffers is a radical change in Christian thought. In this view, the primary signs of divinity are not omnipotence, invulnerability, immutability and absoluteness. From a contemporary relational world view, these are seen signs of a non-living reality. Since living in relation has to do with feeling and experiencing, the notion of an impassable God cannot be reconciled to the notion of a living God.²⁶ In addition, to hold God as impassable and immutable makes the biblical testimony "God is love" all but unintelligible. Thus, the classical view of God gives way to the advent of the suffering God. God is now one who is intrinsically bound up with the world in all its turmoil and tragedy, and who in all creation gradually works out divine purpose in a way that will transform all evil.²⁷

The development of the notion of the suffering God is progressive in that it "resurrects God from the grave of stony impassability."²⁸ What are the implications for the survivor, then, when using a model which suggests that God feels, knows, and experiences all suffering and grief as well as joy, just as the creation experiences? This model of God clearly offers compassion for the recovering survivor. This model can offer divine companionship during a woman's healing journey, regardless of its many ups and downs.

²⁵ Paul S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 45.

²⁶ Joanne C. Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God So Loved the World?" in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, eds. Joanne C. Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 14.

²⁷ Edgar S. Brightman, *The Finding of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1931), 123.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

It also offers a sense of intimacy which is not found in the monarchical model of God. The positive implication of the model is that it is possible for God and the survivor to create a context of care which is mutual, empathetic and growth-enhancing. This is because, unlike the traditional God who is distant and in control, the suffering God is relational and empathetically empowering and transforming. In this respect, the model of the suffering God meets well the criterion of “power-with,” which the monarchical model of God fails to do.

A critical problem of the model of the suffering God is found in its positive strength. The strength of this view of the suffering God is that this God accepts the survivor at her worst while calling her to be her best. Is this true of women survivors of sexual abuse? What if they identify with the suffering God and remain their worst instead of responding to the call to be their best? It could be possibly the case in reality from the perspective we discussed in the previous chapter, women’s epistemological development.

According to Belenky and her colleagues, there is a gender difference in dealing with external authorities among those who arrive at the position of “subjectivist knowledge.”²⁹ The knowers in the stage of subjectivism are those who are shifting from external authority to personal and subjective experiences as the source of knowledge, especially when they are exposed to multiple viewpoints. The basic dilemma for such knowers is how to position the newly emerging, assertive self vis-à-vis “defrocked authority.”³⁰ With the progression to subjectivism, male knowers tend to use their perspective of relative thoughts as a tool for separation and leave as differentiated from

²⁹ Belenky et al., 64-8.

³⁰ Ibid., 63.

others, especially from those in authority. At the same time, they foresee their own future as authorities. By the end of the process, male knowers will establish their status in authority: “sons rejoin fathers as equals.”³¹

Unlike male “multiplists,” female subjective knowers are much more cautious in taking the stance of personal authority and making explicit their subjectivist or multiplist view on truth. Although they sense a freedom to have their own opinions, they do not foresee their own future as authorities to the extent that their male partners do. Neither their significant others nor the society encourage women to take up the banner of multiplicity³² and stake their claim for authority. Unlike their male partners, therefore, they tend to be hidden multiplists with more concern for sustaining connections to others than for their personal authority.³³

What are the implications of Belenky and her colleagues’ view of gender difference and external authority especially in relation to divine authority? It might be inferred that many, if not all, men identify with the suffering God, not the suffering God. In other words, they may take in the divine agent, which is almost interchangeable with the almighty God, more than the suffering experienced by God. Thus, they may identify more often than not with the agency of an almighty God, even when they speak of the suffering God. Perhaps male believers even rejoin the almighty God as equals after they have “defrocked” the almighty One; perhaps, they enthrone the suffering God as their “fellow sufferer”³⁴

³¹ Ibid., 64.

³² Ibid., 65.

³³ Ibid., 64.

³⁴ Brown and Parker, 14. See also Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, 17. Daly addresses a perception of qualitative differences between the conceptualizations of “God” and of the human relationship to God. She states: “Sophisticated thinkers, of course, have never intellectually identified God with a

For women, the other side of the story might be stronger. Many women do not go beyond the suffering image of God to identify with the divine agent who works out all suffering in such a way that it will be transformed. In other words, they may identify with the suffering God, not the suffering God, thus, they remain God's fellow sufferers. This experience may derive from the on-going reality which women have been taught, either to ignore their own suffering, or to view suffering as a cause for shame and doubt rather than a force for change.³⁵ Also, women live in churches in which theology and ethics continue to be oppressive to women. To a large extent these studies fail to take women's experience into account, and thereby trivialize or spiritualize women's suffering.³⁶

If these interpretations are accurate, female believers may be discouraged from becoming their best. The God who suffers from afar may become an excuse to teach that suffering is good, especially when women serve others. Therefore, in spite of its positive aspect, the model of the suffering God demonstrates an inability to empower the survivor to be her best, especially when used as a mere theodicy in which God is clear of all responsibility for evil and thereby remains trustworthy. It is short of the criterion of well-being.³⁷

Superfather in heaven. Nevertheless it is important to recognize that even when very abstract conceptualizations of God are formulated in the mind, images survive in the imagination in such a way that a person can function on two different and even apparently contradictory levels at the same time. Thus one can speak of God as spirit and at the same time imagine 'him' as belonging to the male sex. Such primitive images can profoundly affect conceptualizations which appear to be very refined and abstract" (17-8).

³⁵ Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Trumansburg, N. Y.: Crossing Press, 1984), 112.

³⁶ Daly, 4-5.

³⁷ Bussert, Battered Women, 63-6.

Atoning Savior Jesus Christ

Although we started with notions of God, another fundamental tenet of Christianity is that God is decisively known to us within and through Jesus. For Christians, images and interpretations of God are intimately bound up with how to interpret the life and death of Jesus. The understanding of God, for example, as almighty/impassable or relational/suffering is what is understood in the first place in relation to Jesus and his mission.³⁸ Thus, how to interpret Jesus' living, suffering and dying defines how to understand God, and vice versa, in the Christian tradition. In addition, the life experience of Jesus stands for innocent suffering. Thus, the interpretation of Jesus' suffering in relation to God stands as a paradigm for understanding other innocent sufferings, including the suffering of sexual abuse survivors. More importantly, it reveals how we see and deal with suffering in general and how the survivor interprets and responds to the suffering which has occurred in her particular life.

The earliest interpretation of Jesus' suffering and dying may be the simple statement: "Christ died for our sin in accordance with the scriptures" (1Cor. 15:3).³⁹ The term "for," used repeatedly in such contexts, contains seeds for a soteriology,⁴⁰ or doctrine

³⁸ For Jurgen Moltmann, theologian of hope, the passion of Christ is the decisive event of God's suffering. He states: "In the passion of the Son, the Father himself suffers the pains of abandonment. In the death of the Son, death comes upon God himself, and the Father suffers the death of His Son in his love for forsaken man. Consequently, what happens on the cross must be understood as an event between God and the Son of God." See *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, 192. For Paul S. Fiddes, process theologian, the creation and the cross of Jesus are both central for understanding divine identification with human suffering. He states: "Through his work both in the cross and creation, God can manifest himself as 'the one who is hidden in suffering,' and thus theology of nature and 'theology from the Cross' ought to join hands, though so far they hardly seem to have touched fingertips." See *The Creative Suffering of God*, 39-40.

³⁹ Walter Lowe, "Christ and Salvation," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 225.

⁴⁰ Lowe, 225.

of Christ's work in salvation. In most theological traditions, Jesus' suffering and dying on the cross is God's own saving activity. God requires the death of Jesus, according to many traditions, to make God's plan of salvation effective. There was no way more effective than Jesus' suffering and dying, for the accomplishment of God's salvific love for human beings: without the death of Jesus, we would not be saved.⁴¹

There are three classic views of atonement which attempt to explain how we are saved by Jesus' suffering and death: the view of Christus Victor, the satisfaction theory, and the moral influence theory.⁴² Each theory of atonement establishes a logical link between the incarnation and the cross, according to a certain divine plan of salvation. First, traditional atonement theories will be presented, and then they will be examined for their implications with regard to sexual abuse survivors.

The tradition of Christus Victor is an effort to explain Jesus' death, which can be traced back to Origen and Gregory of Nyssa in the third and fourth centuries.⁴³ This tradition views the death of Jesus as ransom paid to Satan to set free humankind from the power of death, which resulted from sin. Thus, Christ's work was depicted as something to do with death in a mythic language. God had to conceal Godself under the veil of the human nature of Jesus to enter the world of death, which otherwise would not be possible. By the death of Jesus, God gained entrance into the underworld. Death was overwhelmed when confronted by God unveiled in Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead. His resurrection revealed the greater power of God whereby the reign of sin through death lost its firm grip

⁴¹ Brown and Parker, 4.

⁴² Ibid., 5.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

on human beings. Here, the cross is a triumph in which the reign of sin is ended and death itself is overcome. Redemption is liberation from sin, death, and evil forces.⁴⁴

The satisfaction theory was developed by Anselm, an eleventh-century theologian, when he posed the question of why it was necessary for God to become human.⁴⁵ He found ground for the necessity of the incarnation as well as the death of Jesus in the moral order of the universe. The moral order of God was disturbed by human sin and therefore required rectification. Although only humans could rectify this, they were unable to do so because of their sin and because of their debt to God which was beyond all human ability to pay. Thus, only one who was both human and divine could accomplish the requisite payment or satisfaction in such a way that it could be a “gift from God offered by a human being” to all humankind.⁴⁶ Therefore, the incarnation was necessary. By the death of Jesus, a satisfactory payment was offered to God, and God’s punishment for human sin was removed through Jesus’ vicarious suffering and death: God could reconcile humankind while satisfying God’s honor and justice. Redemption is God’s forgiveness of sin, and God’s reconciliation with human beings is made possible through Jesus’ atonement.

Finally the third theory of atonement is the moral influence theory of Peter Abelard who questioned the satisfaction theory: “If [the] sin of Adam was so great that it could be expiated only by the death of Christ, what expiation will avail for the act of murder committed against Christ.”⁴⁷ Abelard rejected the satisfaction theory and reasoned that it

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵ Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds., “Anselm: The Logic of Atonement,” in Readings in Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 210-17. See also Lowe, 230.

⁴⁶ Lowe, 230.

⁴⁷ Peter Abelard, “Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans,” in Gerhard O. Forde, “Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ,” in Word and World 3, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 22. Cited in Brown and

was not God's sense of justice but the hardened hearts of human beings that was blocking salvation: the inability of humans to see or accept God's mercy was the very barrier to God's salvific work. In Abelard's view, Christ was best understood in terms of his work and its moral effect on human beings, which would liberate them from sin. Thus, Jesus' work was to be a living example of God's love, which had the purpose of awakening a corresponding love in the hearts of humankind.⁴⁸ The death of Jesus was the culmination of his ministry in that it spoke to his love through the way he faced his end and accepted those involved in his death. On the cross, Jesus' awakening love and moral edification were more radically embodied than in any other place, because of his innocent suffering and tragic death. Redemption is "awakening love," demonstrated by Jesus, which influences human beings to be free from sin.

Although classic theories of atonement may seem outdated and irrelevant to contemporary Christians, they are still at the heart of the church community. The Christus Victor view can still hold together what is beyond human understanding in its very mythic language. It is not unusual to hear the Christus Victor message in funeral services, during pastoral visits, Sunday worship and Bible studies. It appeals to Christian faith with conviction and hope: the conviction that God is the power greater than any evil force and darkness; and the hope that God's power can draw good out of any evil and suffering and will ultimately triumph.⁴⁹ These versions of the Christus Victor are all familiar to Christians.

Parker, 11.

⁴⁸ Lowe, 231.

⁴⁹ Thomas C. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 229-31.

In a similar way, the satisfaction theory resounds in every Sunday sermon: Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin: he was wounded for our transgressions and bore the stripes by which we are healed. The echoes of moral influence theory also reverberate in believers: Jesus is our perfect model in his obedience, love, and self-sacrifice. If theories of atonement are still major parts of Christian teachings, what are their implications for sexual abuse survivors?

I would like to answer this question by examining two primary problems found in atonement theories: (1) Jesus' actual death becomes unreal through its glorification or trivialization; and (2) the way God relates to Jesus is abusive. In fact, the more suffering is glorified or trivialized, the more God appears abusive. As mentioned above, the attraction of the Christus Victor theory is that hope and faith are not defeated by any hardships, but its strength ends here. Since the actual death of Jesus is incorporated into a mythic form, "his suffering and death are retold as divine trickery, part of a larger plot to deceive the deceiver."⁵⁰ It is surely a theological effort to emphasize Jesus' work in a mythic framework, but such efforts can violate reality. Thus, the suffering and death of Jesus become "not ultimately real" and, thus, "not ultimately true."⁵¹

While Jesus' death is trivialized as a maneuver and is in itself an illusion in the Christus Victor theory, it is crowned as a priceless gift for humankind and as a perfect offering to God in the satisfaction theory. It is the infinite worth of Jesus' life that makes it the perfect offering as gift: Jesus as the Christ is of infinite worth, giving infinite worth to

⁵⁰ Brown and Parker, 6.

⁵¹ Ibid., 6.

whatever he offers.⁵² Thus the infinite worth of the offering is sufficient to make payment for “what is owed for the sins of the whole world, . . . and even for infinitely more.”⁵³ The sufficient condition for atonement, therefore, comes from the divine nature of Jesus while the necessity of atonement from his human side. Here is a two-way possibility for glorifying the death of Jesus. The self-sacrifice of Jesus is a privilege, not available to ordinary human beings, but only to the chosen one born as Christ. Thus, suffering is associated with a divine identity and takes on divine attributes as its hidden nature. Understood this way, suffering is inevitable on the road to glorification.

In a different respect, the self-sacrifice of Jesus is the total obedience of the Son, even unto death, to God the father. Such total obedience is beyond human capacity, since human capacity is vitiated by sin. Thus, Jesus is sanctioned as a perfect model for obedience to God, and his death as a perfect example to human beings. Whenever sanctioned for its ethical implications, Jesus’ death is elevated. This is where the third theory of atonement, Abelard’s moral influence, joins the satisfaction theory to glorify the suffering and death of Jesus as the perfect model for human beings. When glorified, suffering stops being suffering. Glorified suffering is no longer real suffering. In short, the atonement theories discussed above divorce themselves from the actual suffering and death of Jesus to the degree by which that they violate the experience of Jesus.

⁵² Anselm interpreted moral value and worth in terms of a certain concept of honor. If the one offended is of infinite worth as in the case of God, the injury to the person’s honor is of infinite degree comparable with the infinite worth of the person. This is the reason, according to Anselm, why the debt or liability created by human sin to God is infinite in nature. The same logic works from the other side. The worth of a gift offered by a person is determined by the worth of the giver. According to this logic, since Jesus is of infinite worth, his self-sacrifice as a gift for human beings and as an offering to God is also of infinite worth. See Hodgson and King, eds., “Anselm: The Logic of Atonement,” in *Readings in Christian Theology*, 210-17. See also Lowe, 230.

⁵³ Hodgson and King, eds., “Anselm: The Logic of Atonement,” in *Readings in Christian Theology*, 211.

The second problem in atonement theories is the relation between God and Jesus. The way God relates to Jesus is abusive, and the more suffering is glorified or trivialized, the more God appears abusive. In the Christus Victor theory, Jesus is portrayed as bait for Satan, and his death as a maneuver. Far from having the power implied in the title of the Christus Victor, Jesus is helplessly small and expendable at the hands of God. It is important to take a close look at the contradiction between what is explicit and what is implicit in the Christus Victor theory. The theory states: God is all good and all powerful so as to save humankind from the grip of evil forces through God's only son, Jesus. This is what is in the foreground of the theory. In its background, however, is a God who uses his son as bait for Satan; a God who abuses the son to meet his divine need to defeat evil; and a God who victimizes his only son to reveal his love to the world. If we put aside religious terms and notions for a while, the relationship between Jesus and God in this atonement theory is one of the worst imaginable. While God is arbitrary to the point of using deceit, abuse and victimization, Jesus is passive, selfless, and voiceless.

What if we dare to apply, here, the epistemological theory of Belenky et al. to the relations of God and Jesus? I think the relations between God and Jesus fall into the first category of silence.⁵⁴ Silence is the beginning stage of epistemological development in the researchers' scheme because of the lack of resources for nurturing the mind and self: the total absence of mutuality in communication and in power. Such an absence of mutuality is notable in the way God relates to Jesus in the theory of the Christus Victor: Jesus is the

⁵⁴ I use the Belenky et al scheme in the analysis of the relationship between God and Jesus to show its potential for the empowering of sexual abuse survivors. My use of the scheme is not to compare one mode of knowing with another to evaluate them hierarchically, which is neither what Belenky et al. intended in their work. Rather, I attempt to bring light, through the scheme, to a potential danger in ways we Christians deal with traditional resources, especially when divorced from their contexts.

totally silent victim for the sake of God's plan for human salvation. Offensive as it may sound, the way God and Jesus relate to each other reveals the most immature stage of their intellectual and ethical development. Nonetheless, it might be helpful to know how our God and Christ relate to each other for human salvation from an epistemological viewpoint. The light illuminates our intellectual and ethical life when we live by the classical faith of the Christus Victor theory.

In a similar way, the satisfaction theory reveals the way God relates to Jesus. In this theory, God is caught in a dilemma between two moral principles -- love and justice -- in relation to human sin.⁵⁵ God's desire for human salvation conflicts with God's desire for justice. This is because God is not only for human beings but also for all the creation; as the authority of the moral order in the whole world God cannot cancel sin without satisfying justice through its proper compensation. Thus, God desires to punish sin as much as God desires to forgive it. While God is pictured in agony over the necessary punishment of sinners, which is "death," Jesus is imagined as a filial son who knows his Father well.⁵⁶ It is Jesus' "prerogative," unlike others who have sinned, to have a choice to "undergo death or not to undergo death."⁵⁷ However, Jesus allows himself to "be killed for the sake of justice," justice which is intimately tied to God's honor as well as to God's plan of salvation for human beings.⁵⁸

Unlike the God in Christus Victor theory, who seems to have no moral principles,

⁵⁵ Brown and Parker, 7.

⁵⁶ Hodgson and King, eds., "Anselm: The Logic of Atonement," in Readings in Christian Theology, 211.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 213.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 211.

the God in the satiation theory has clear moral principles. A problem with this God is not the absence of morality but the reverse, an absolutized and rigid morality, which unavoidably leads to divine cruelty in the name of justice. The theory says: God keeps God's moral integrity intact, and at the same time embraces sinners with love, by sacrificing God's own Son, Jesus, as the payment for human sin. This is what is in the foreground of the story. In its background, however, God is inconsistent in moral reasoning, putting his own son to death for the sake of his honor-bound justice.

Take a close look at God in the satisfaction theory. The God who is aware of conflicts between love and justice with regard to human salvation fails to recognize the same problem in the death of Jesus. The problem is that, if sinners ought not to go unpunished because it violates justice, then, by the same token, the innocent ought not to be punished because that also violates justice. The innocent suffering and death of Jesus violates both the principle of love and also that of justice, regardless of the reason and the involvement of God. In addition to such a moral inconsistency, God in the satisfaction theory is preoccupied with the restoration of his honor. God claims not to divorce love from justice and vice versa, but this claim is invalidated when God the Father desires the death of his own Son for the sake of his honor.⁵⁹

From an epistemological perspective, the relations between God and Jesus in the satisfaction theory seem to fall into the second category -- received knowledge. This God has moral principles but never goes beyond the established knowledge and truth, thereby absolutizing what is given. God, according to satisfaction theory, kills his own son according to his absolutized knowledge of justice. This tragedy results from God's

⁵⁹ Brown and Parker, 7.

inability to take Jesus' perspective. While God is blindly legal and authoritarian, Jesus in this model is a perfect example of a good received knower. He has a choice not to die, according to Anselm, but sees clearly what is expected of him by God the Father, the source of truth; Jesus dies as a good son, believing that what he does is absolutely right.⁶⁰

The relations between God and Jesus in the moral influence theory are almost the same as discussed in the satisfaction theory; if there is any difference, it is only in emphasis. God and Jesus are loving Father and Son, intimately bound to each other with the principle of Love. Nevertheless, this beloved Son dies to satisfy his loving Father. Jesus is killed for the sake of God's love, not God's justice. This time Jesus allows himself to be killed in the place of God in order to reveal God's unlimited love, rather than in the place of sinners to meet God's justice.

With eyes free of doctrines, it may be disturbing to see the relations between God and Jesus in atonement theories turn out to be abusive. It may be more disturbing, however, from the eyes of sexual abuse survivors, to see the violence between God and Jesus in atonement theories never questioned in the Christian tradition but worshiped as God's logic of salvation. What if we saw the stories in atonement theories as case studies presented for our professional evaluation in a child abuse report? How do we deal with a father who plans to kill his son for his great mission, whatever it is? It might be offensive to think that way. However, it might be more dangerously self-deceptive if we do not question; we may end up with the worship of violence as God's mysterious logic of

⁶⁰ Anselm states: "when he [Jesus] died, he gave what he was not obliged to. But no one will deny that when he gave this example in such a way, he did something better (and that his doing it was more pleasing to God) than if he had not done it. And no one will say that he was not obliged to do what he understood to be better and to be more pleasing to God." See "Anselm: The Logic of Atonement," in *Readings in Christian Theology*, 212.

salvation and, thus, we sanction the abuse of power in our society.

We have discussed, this far, the two problems inherent in theories of atonement by contrasting what is explicit and what is implicit in the theories. In summary, what is explicit in the theories is the glorification of Jesus' suffering and death; what is implicit is that Jesus is an abused child. In a similar way, what is explicit is God's love and salvation for human beings; what is implicit is that God abuses his divine child. A question arises: How can a theology of atonement, which itself suffers from an inability to go beyond violence and suffering, help survivors of sexual abuse overcome their suffering and move toward a new life free of violence? It is almost impossible, I believe, for a theology of suffering based on atonement theories to be of help to sexual abuse survivors, since it theoretically lacks the capacity to challenge suffering and violence. Such a theology of suffering, at best, helps survivors of sexual abuse to sustain themselves in the midst of pain and despair, without directly confronting the evil in their lives. At worst, they are even taught to die for their perpetrators, accepting their abuse as a cross to bear, just as Jesus accepted his cross in atonement theories. In this respect, the understandings of Jesus' suffering in atonement theories not only fail to name violence as violence, but also, I dare to say, commit the sin of idealizing ill-being, and thereby contribute to the victimization of the powerless. At this point, traditional understandings of Jesus' suffering are not only short of the second and third criteria for assessing theological notions but reinforce survivors' ill-being and their invisibility. That is to say, atonement theories render the very real victims of human violence invisible by presenting Jesus' suffering and death as salvific, thereby contributing to the anesthesia of both, victim and victimizer, to human

violence and senseless sufferings as its result.⁶¹

Just as Anselm reformulated the Christus Victor tradition into his satisfaction theory, and Abelard reformulated Anselm's tradition into his moral influence theory, so we need to re-vision traditional understandings of Jesus' suffering and death in such a way that they relate to sexual violence and name its cause. In this respect, I agree with feminist and pastoral theologians that Jesus' suffering is not salvific, but his commitment to life and justice is.⁶² Brown and Parker have re-visioned Jesus' suffering and death in this same direction.

Christianity is at heart and essence justice, radical love, and liberation. . . .

Jesus chose to live a life in opposition to unjust, oppressive cultures.

Jesus did not choose the cross but chose integrity and faithfulness, refusing to change course because of threat.

Jesus' death was an unjust act, done by humans who chose to reject his way of life and sought to silence him through death. The travesty of the suffering and death of Jesus is not redeemed by the resurrection.

Jesus was not an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, because God does not need to be appeased and demands not sacrifice but justice. . . . No one was saved by the death of Jesus.

Brown and Parker continue to re-vision:

Suffering is never redemptive, and suffering cannot be redeemed.

The cross is a sign of tragedy. God's grief is revealed there and everywhere and every time life is thwarted by violence. . . .

To be a Christian means keeping faith with those who have heard and lived God's call for justice, radical love, and liberation; who have challenged unjust systems both political and ecclesiastical. . . .

Resurrection means that death is overcome in those precise instances when human beings choose life, refusing the threat of death. Jesus climbed out of the grave in the Garden of Gethsemane when he refused to abandon his commitment to

⁶¹ Brown and Parker, 1, 19.

⁶² Refer to the following books with regard to critiques of the notion of Jesus' suffering as salvific: Rita-Lou Clarke, *Pastoral Care of Battered Women* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 74-7; Marie M. Fortune and Judith Hertz, "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence," in *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*, eds. Mary D. Pellauer, et al. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 72-5; Heyward, *Redemption of God*, 54-7, and *Our Passion for Justice*, 129-30, 214-21.

the truth even though his enemies threatened him with death. On Good Friday, the Resurrected One was Crucified.⁶³

As beautifully revisioned by Brown and Parker, it is critical to think of Jesus as one who challenged many sources of suffering in his time and whose commitment to life and justice, not suffering itself, was salvific. Such a understanding of Jesus' suffering helps sexual abuse survivors name sexual abuse as a sin, confront its source, and find a meaning not in suffering but in liberation from suffering.

In this section I examined theological notions such as images of God and Jesus' suffering in the light of sexual abuse survivors' experiences. In so doing, I claimed Christian beliefs for the survivors' well-being, and claimed to transform them for the purpose, as well: Christian faith is not used as a "weapon" against survivors but as a "resource for courage, hope, and commitment" in their struggles for life and justice.⁶⁴ With the theme of the commitment to life and justice as an expression of God's radical love and liberation, as noted by Brown and Parker, we turn to the issue of pastoral care and counseling for sexual abuse survivors.

Constructing Pastoral Care Perspective

Since it is crucial for pastors to know to whom they provide care and support, I'd like to review in brief some important characteristics of Korean survivors of sexual abuse. In Chapter 4, I argued that Korean survivors of sexual abuse have suffered from the sexism in Korean society as well as from their abuse incidents. In Chapter 5, I identified Korean female survivors as "courageous and vulnerable" in that they had strong yet disowned

⁶³ Brown and Parker, 27-8.

⁶⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), x.

needs for speaking and that they found no place to go as they emerged as subjectivist knowers who know truth from within. In Chapter 6, I called for a reconstruction of traditional notions of God and Jesus' suffering since such traditions are part of the problem rather than the solution of survivors' spiritual crisis due to their inadequacy for speaking to survivors' suffering as ethical issues. Thus, Korean survivors of sexual abuse are those who have been deeply hurt by Korean patriarchal culture as well as sexual violence, whose pains were silenced and prolonged by traditional teachings of Christianity, and who now desperately search for alternative ways of living and believing, for their sense of wholeness and integrity.

It is a challenge for pastoral caregivers to work with sexual abuse survivors, since it requires caregivers' emotional and cognitive maturity to go beyond what they have received culturally and religiously. In other words, the experiences of sexual abuse survivors demand that pastoral caregivers question some of the most basic assumptions in Korean culture, such as gender relationships, and in Christianity, such as the nature of power attributed to God and meanings attributed to Jesus' suffering. In this respect, pastoral care necessarily entails the facilitation and application of normative judgments or a hermeneutical inquiry into the foundation upon which cultural and religious teachings are built. Pastoral care must go to a deeper level and test the pertinence of cultural and religious proposals for pastoral care if it seeks not merely to maintain a given situation or suffering, but to transform it. This evaluative dimension of pastoral care has been missing in the Korean church in general and in the pastoral relationships experienced by the women in this study in particular.

In this section, I place the pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors in the context of the

Korean church and attempt to expand the church's resources in a manner that relates to the needs of sexual abuse survivors. There are three reasons why I place the pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors primarily with the church community. First, the community of faith precipitates and facilitates pastoral care. The spirit of pastoral care must be embedded and embodied first of all in the community of the Christian faith before it finds its expression in the work of Christian individuals. Without the communal spirit of care which is nurtured by the church's worship, preaching, teaching, and community relations, there may be no pastoral care, regardless of whether or not it is attempted by clergy or specialists such as pastoral counselors, since it roots in the faith community.

Second, the mode of pastoral care is on a continuum rather than split into the individual versus communal modes. Pastoral care takes place on a continuum: at one end of the continuum is pastoral care involved in group leadership such as worship, and at the other is ministry to persons in trouble, by individual Christian persons. Any sharp division of pastoral care into the two modes violates the relational understanding of pastoral care: pastoral care is nurtured and lived by the community of faith in the manner that it motivates individual Christian persons to embody in their relations what they have already experienced in their communal lives.

Finally, pastoral care that has been practiced in the community of the Korean church is communal. Although roles and functions such as worship, preaching, and teaching are not generally considered pastoral care in the Western tradition of Christianity,⁶⁵ they have

⁶⁵ William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective: An Essay with Exhibits (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 7-8.

been the primary means of pastoral care in the Korean church.⁶⁶ The one-to-one individual mode of pastoral care which is highlighted in the Western tradition has been never the primary one in Korea. When pastoral care practiced in Western tradition is assumed as a kind of norm, the communal mode of pastoral care in the Korean church might be viewed as uncaring, necessitating replacement with the “real one,” that is, its individual mode. Since I place the mode of pastoral care on a continuum in nature, I facilitate the communal mode of pastoral care rather than dismiss it in such a way that it embraces and nurtures the individual mode of pastoral care as well.

Therefore, on the proceeding basis, pastoral care is defined as the bringing to bear of the total ministry upon persons in such a way that it creates the context for well-being physically, psychologically, and spiritually.⁶⁷ Focusing on the communal mode of pastoral care, in this section, I am concerned about the church’s response to sexual abuse survivors: “How can the Korean church help?” Pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors that is oriented to individual approaches will be discussed in the next section with the question, “How can Korean pastors and pastoral counselors help?”

Before I discuss the Korean church’s response to sexual abuse survivors, I am wondering whether there is any model experience of pastoral care in the history of the Korean church, a church’s response which could not only serve as guidelines for pastoral care but also contain the analysis of the nature of sexual abuse in itself. Here, I return to

⁶⁶ Ki-chun Lee, *A Study of Korean Pastoral Theology* (in Korean) (Seoul: Methodist Theological Seminary Press, 1991), 142-43.

⁶⁷ I slightly alter the definition of pastoral care presented by William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle. The definition of pastoral care by Clebsch and Jaekle is: “The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.” See Clebsch and Jaekle, 4.

the triple definition of the sexual abuse experience which was discussed in the first section, that of the power-over, ill-being, and invisibility. I raise the same question as previously in relation to the definition of sexual abuse. Have there been any experiences in the history of the Korean church that involved struggles with the nature of power, human suffering, and ways of resolving it? Have there been any experiences of pastoral care in which the nature of power-over was challenged as a sin, the ill-being of life addressed as unjust, and silencing forces refused as evil? Has the church ever cried out for God's vindication of people fallen prey to the abuse of power, the resultant ill-being, and conspiracy of silence? If so, that would be far closer to the ideal vision of the Korean church's ministry with sexual abuse survivors.

It was the suffering of Korean people under Japanese colonialism during World War I that called for the church's response. It was the darkest period in the history of Korea in that the Korean people lost everything - - their country, their language, and their freedom;⁶⁸ the Japanese did everything within their power to define Korean reality, to tell Koreans who they were, and their definition, of course, extended no further than their social, political, and economic interests. The Korean church suffered with Korean people during that period and brought to bear upon them the caring resources of the Christian faith.

If we do not stop on the surface but look at the core, I believe, we find a parallel between imperialism among nations and sexual violence among people. The two experiences look different in appearance but are similar in nature. As human-designed, both involve the abuse of power, regardless of whether it is called imperialism or sexual

⁶⁸ Japan took over Korea in 1910. Any political movements among Koreans were totally suppressed, and the use of the Korean language was prohibited by 1937. See Man-yol Lee et al., Christianity in Korea and Its Nationalist Movement (in Korean) (Seoul: Bosong, 1986).

violence; they result in human suffering, regardless of the degree of destructiveness involved; and they try hard to silence their victims at any cost. If the experience of imperialism is similar to that of sexual abuse in nature, and the Korean church has already experienced its ability to care under Japanese imperialism, then there might be much to infer from the church's previous experience for its current ministry with sexual abuse survivors. What type of pastoral care did the Korean church provide to Korean people under Japanese imperialism? How did the Korean church bring to bear upon the oppressed the caring resources of the Christian faith?

Ki-chun Lee, a Korean pastoral theologian, noted that the Korean church exerted itself to sustain and guide the Korean people during the period of the Japanese occupation. He states: "The function of guiding was needed for the Korean church to respond to people, people who were in a transitional period and suffered from conflicting values. The function of sustaining was also necessary for the Korean church since people were suffering in the midst of the oppression."⁶⁹ Though not explicitly relating to the two functions dominant in the Korean church at the time, he mentions two points: the ministry of the Korean Protestant church has been centered on worship and preaching; revival services have been the chief means of meeting Korean Christians' needs unmet in the formal services in the church.⁷⁰ Following the points made by Lee and addressing other aspects of pastoral care he missed, I attempt to reconstruct what has been practiced in the Korean church during the Japanese occupation.

My points are: pastoral care in the Korean church under Japanese colonialism is

⁶⁹ Ki-chun Lee, 143.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 144.

characterized by the two pastoral functions of sustaining and guiding through the communal means of worship and preaching. The two functions of sustaining and guiding are undergirded by the two other functions, reconciling and healing, in a dialectical way. More importantly, it is the awareness of the problem shared among Koreans as a form of a normative evaluation of reality that gives direction and effectiveness to the pastoral functions in the Korean church.

In the context of the oppression and powerlessness of the Korean people, the ministry of the Korean church had to be that of sustaining and guiding, as noted by Lee. The function of sustaining in the Korean church was to provide symbolic means for the Koreans to unite with the source of power and care in the universe. Through symbolic means such as baptism, communion, and prayer, the Koreans were put in touch with God. Especially through worship, the church provided every Sunday that Koreans confirmed again their symbolic unity with God, trusted again the divine order in the world, gained the sense of protection, and obtained the power for survival. People came to the church, and the church sustained them in the presence of the oppression. Historical data supports this point. Many early Korean Christians were those who were impressed by the Western civilizations the Christian faith carried with it and were motivated to be Christian since this seemed the only way to empower their country as well as themselves.⁷¹ Many of them were transformed not by the Western power but by the Christian faith, and walked the way to martyrdom in the history of Korean Christianity.⁷² Everything points to the Christian church as the place in which Koreans found refuge and sustenance in the midst of their

⁷¹ Man-yol Lee et al., Christianity in Korea and Its Nationalist Movement. See also Jong-min Seo, People Who Loved the Church and the Country (in Korean) (Seoul: Kidokyoomoonsa, 1990).

⁷² Kun-shik Shim, The Lives of Martyrs in the Korean Church (in Korean) (Seoul: Youngmoon, 1994).

sufferings from oppression.

The Korean Protestant church gave significant status to the pastor. The pastor was a representative of God, a knower of truth who articulated the theological world view, and a presider over rituals and ceremonies which provide sustenance. Because of this symbolic nature of the role of the pastor and because of the cultural context in which male authority and knowledge were highly valued, the Korean pastor, namely the male, became the spiritual leader, and was expected to guide the congregation. The guiding role of the pastor was highlighted in preaching especially when the pastor could relate the resources of the Christian faith to the reality in which the congregation lived. Korean people came to the church to listen to “God’s Word”; from the pulpit the Korean pastor expounded the Christian faith that affirmed their identity, values, and purposes as children of God;⁷³ they did not always believe, but in worship and listening to preaching, they began to believe again. Listening to “My Five Prayers” written in jail, the congregation was guided to commit themselves to truth, making their own five prayers when being threatened to death.⁷⁴ It was preaching that was greatly facilitated in the leadership role of the pastor to guide the congregation.

The emphasis on the sustaining and guiding functions in pastoral care during the Japanese captivity days does not mean that other pastoral functions did not take place in the Korean church. Although a Korean person’s personality was damaged by oppression, wholeness did come for many through their experiences of God’s love. When becoming nobody in the eyes of the colonialists, many Korean Christians experienced a reality that

⁷³ The Committee in Commemoration of Martyrs in the Korean Church, The Collection of Sermons of Ki-Chol Joo (in Korean) (Seoul: Emmau, 1988), 76-81.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9-20.

affirmed their being as persons and their human rights as sacred. The affirming life force they experienced lifted, transformed, and liberated them in the midst of their sufferings. It may not be accidental to find two revival movements in the history of the Korean church during those times. The first movement occurred just before Japan took over Korea and the second one when freedom hoped for seemed the most unrealistic.⁷⁵ Reconciliation with God, which was greatly facilitated in revival movements, served a sustaining function in the Korean church since it had implications for living, for being sustained in the presence of oppression. It had also implications for healing, since it served to amalgamate all the old hurts and pains in the way that it opened new meanings and purposes. Korean pastors who exerted a great influence on Korean people were those who had experienced their reconciliation with God and thereby recovered their wholeness in the first place.

The way the Korean church related to the ruling power of Japan was dialectic. Korean Christians suffered from their conflicting loyalties divided to God as their faith object, the country as their love object, and the power of Japan as their survival object. Some went to the extremes, giving priority to the country and getting involved with nationalist movements.⁷⁶ Some went to other extremes, identifying with the ruling power and seeing the reality from the eyes of the powerful.⁷⁷ Many Korean Christians remained in the middle, and the Korean church showed the way in which they integrated their split loyalties

⁷⁵ Tai Hyun Chang, *A Study of the Spirituality of Korean Christians: Focused on the Holy Spirit Movement and Shamanism*, D.Min. diss., Claremont School of Theology, 1988 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1988).

⁷⁶ Jong-min Seo, 57-137. See also Man-yol Lee et al., 285-334.

⁷⁷ Yong-kyu Park, *Toward the Higher Ground: A Biography of Rev. Ki-Chol Joo* (in Korean) (Seoul: Word of Life, 1992), 101-05. See also The Christian Literature Society of Korea, "Worship of the Originator of Japan" (in Korean), in *The Dictionary of Christianity* (Seoul: Daehankidokoyeseohoe, 1972), 605-06.

with the Christian faith. Pastors taught people how to claim basic human rights in the name of God, not of the country, not of other foreign powers.⁷⁸ It was radical to attribute basic human rights to God's will and claim them in the name of God. To encourage the Korean people to claim what was deprived of them, in the name of God, was more dangerous to the ruling power than any other action. Many Korean pastors whose reconciliation with God eventually revealed the sacredness of human rights stood up for the Korean people in the name of God. The life stories and sermons of Korean pastors who died for their faith provide ample evidence that they lived up to and taught people the liberation tradition of the Bible.⁷⁹ "The Authority of the Prophets" and "The Commitment of All to Die for Truth" were examples of sermons, sermons that not only showed how the church brought to bear upon the Korean people the resources of the Christian faith, but also showed also the way in which the church taught them to claim their basic human rights in the name of God and thereby tap their inner strengths.⁸⁰

Finally, it is worth noting that the effectiveness of pastoral functions in the Korean church under the oppression is not in or of itself but lies in the shared awareness of what the problem was. Korean people knew that their country was taken over by Japan; since the take-over, all activities they claimed as their right and dignity were named as illegal and treated as such. The Korean church knew that Korean people were suffering under the Japanese colonialism; what was labeled as illegal and treated as such was illegal from the eyes of God. The church and the Koreans both knew what the problem was and what they

⁷⁸ Yong-kyu Park, 56-7, 187-91, and 212-18.

⁷⁹ Kun-shik Shim, Life Stories of Twenty-Five Persons in the History of the Korean Church (in Korean) (Seoul: Youngmoon, 1993). See also Shim, The Lives of Martyrs in the Korean Church.

⁸⁰ Committee in Commemoration of Martyrs in the Korean Church, 32-7, 138-44.

wanted to do about it. It was the shared perspective about their reality that guided pastoral functions to be effective. It gave them a direction disclosed in their experience of suffering. It gave them a norm emerging out of the context of the Korean experience. The direction or the norm which emerged out of the Korean experience and guided pastoral functions was that of “liberation,” liberation from suffering. In the sustaining function, Korean pastors encouraged people to be aware of the hostile environment and empowered them to tap their inner strengths through the experience of God’s love toward them. In the guiding function, Korean pastors became the role models of how to live with courage and faith in the presence of oppression. They provided stories and experiences from the Bible as the tools to think with, live with, and challenge with. In the reconciling function, Korean pastors pointed to a reality in which God’s mercy flowed toward the Korean people, a divine mercy that embraced them as they were and opened their eyes to their beauty and value. And in the healing function, Korean pastors taught people how to claim human rights and dignity in the name of God and thereby experience and exercise the freedom tapped inside. However repressed and suppressed they were because of the reality of oppression, the functions of sustaining, guiding, reconciling, and healing served as guides towards the liberation of the oppressed Korean people.

The pastoral care outlined in the proceeding paragraphs is the tradition the Korean church has, and most Korean Christians know about it. My task for sexual abuse survivors is to follow the tradition of the Korean church and make it as explicit and applicable as possible with respect to the care of those suffering from sexual abuse.

Liberation as the Norm of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors must begin with a theological basis. This is

because the way we understand and believe in God will make a difference in the way we come to understand and practice pastoral care. I believe that God is the name of a reality that gives life and sustains it, a reality that is luring life to join the reality that affirms it. I also believe that God is the name of a reality that resists any harm to life, a reality that is calling life to join the reality that is against any negation of its beauty and value. Further, I believe that God is only real in a reality that cares for life and paradoxically is more real in a reality that grieves over and suffers from the blockage and destruction of life. I dare to believe that the life-caring reality is the name of God: the life-liberating caring becomes God's visible presence. This is what I have learned from the tradition of the Christian faith, the art of combining the most human and the most divine to form a context for theologizing and caring. It is a perspective underlying the stories of the Exodus, the prophets, and Jesus in the Bible.

The basis for pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors is the recognition of the harmful effects of the sexist society in which we live. Real oppression of women based on gender is the basis of low self-esteem, powerlessness, and abuse. To ignore this reality is to be less responsible and is potentially dangerous; ignoring the reality is a mechanism of social control, protecting oppressive forces in society. The norm of pastoral care for sexual abuse survivors cannot be separated from the awareness of the power imbalance between genders and the society that supports it. It can not be separated from the struggle of sexual abuse survivors, the struggle of the power-over, ill-being, and silence in the sexist society as well as the hopes and dreams that arise from the struggle. Liberation is the name of a reality in which God as the source of life is already with the struggle of sexual abuse survivors and stands for hopes and dreams that arise from the struggle. Pastoral care of

sexual abuse survivors means to participate in the reality of struggle toward healing that God has already begun in their lives.

Pastoral Care in the Context of Liberation

Pastoral care means liberation. It aims to free sexual abuse survivors from internal and external forces that prevent them from growing toward their full potential. The purpose of pastoral care is to bring to bear upon sexual abuse survivors the total liberation resources of the Christian faith. The four functions in pastoral care are also guided by the norm of liberation in the following way. First, the four functions cooperate with one another to serve the liberation of sexual abuse survivors. Although any one of the functions may be emphasized at a given time, they are interdependent and affect one another simultaneously. Second, each function in pastoral care is a process which proceeds toward its deeper pastoral purpose of liberation. Third, the functions can be of use in whatever combination that is needed in each pastoral situation. They can also take place in the care continuum of the communal through the individual modes. Finally, each function works toward liberation from internal and external forces that block the growth and the wholeness of sexual abuse survivors.

In the context of liberation, the four functions in pastoral are described as follows. Healing is the pastoral function that names the effects of sexual abuse, facilitates the well-being, and brings out the advanced condition of being which has been either absent or lost. In the healing function, the pastor helps sexual abuse survivors to recover the capacity to claim their rights in the name of God and thereby experience and exercise the freedom tapped within and the integrity restored in their lives. Guiding is to offer the means to understand the nature of the sexual abuse experience as the power-over, ill-being, and

silence: thereby they are helped to make choices between various courses of action which will help them solve the problems they are facing. Sustaining is to support the work of sexual abuse survivors when they address issues or persons from the past and in the present. Though empowerment is an important aspect of each pastoral function, it is more saliently so in the sustaining function. The function of reconciling serves to create the context in which sexual abuse survivors come to terms with themselves and with God. It is like the two sides of a coin to recover a sense of peace with the self and with God in the reconciling function. Only when it is done, and only when it brings out the survivor's strength and confidence, not the disguised helplessness, can other reconciliation, such as forgiving the abuser, be considered in a meaningful way.

Pastoral Care in the Context of the Korean Church

As noted above, the functions in pastoral care are interrelated and operate simultaneously. Because of the intimate relationship among the functions, it is possible to rely upon certain functions among them and gain a vantage point from which to facilitate the whole process of the liberation. As discussed in the proceeding paragraphs, Korean pastoral care is characterized by the two functions of sustaining and guiding. The two functions take place in the communal mode, centering upon preaching in worship. Because of the character of Korean pastoral care, it is relevant to rely upon the guiding function and gain a vantage point from which to facilitate other pastoral functions toward the liberation of sexual abuse survivors. It means that a heavy responsibility of pastoral care of sexual abuse survivors is first of all placed on the pastor and his/her ability to relate to sexual abuse as ethical and spiritual issues in preaching. It also means that an emphasis is placed on the congregation and their ability to respond to the pastor's guiding function.

The pastor as the major symbol of the church and the congregation as the community of care create a context in which sexual abuse survivors are held and mirrored positively and thereby learn again the meaning of trust that was betrayed in their lives.

The ministry of the Korean church is preaching-centered. Preaching in the Korean church is primarily doctrinal and expository because of the emphasis given on the communication of the Word of God.⁸¹ Though those approaches to preaching have contributed to the development of the Korean church's identity, the human side of preaching is left largely to implication. To minister to persons, which was the ministry of Jesus, preaching needs to begin with people's real problems. Sexual abuse survivors are those whose genuine doubts, questions, and yearning deserve the concern of preaching. When preaching addresses sexual abuse survivors' real problems, it begins to create an atmosphere of caring in the congregation. For preaching to be genuinely guiding, the following need to be involved.

First, the pastor must have a clear position on the issue of sexual abuse. The way the pastor approaches sexual abuse makes a critical difference in the way the congregation comes to understand and respond to sexual abuse survivors, as well as in the way sexual abuse survivors understand and relate to themselves. When the pastor communicates concern and caring, not shame, in the way he/she approaches sexual abuse, guiding begins. It is not words but the way the pastor understands the issue and the way he/she is concerned about sexual abuse survivors that are felt as real and communicated as such. In this sense, the pastor as a person is at stake. It is a prerequisite to preaching as guiding that the pastor needs to be a liberated person in the first place, liberated from pervasive myths about

⁸¹ Eun-kyu Park, "An Analysis of the Ministry of the Korean Church" (in Korean), *Christian Thought* 40, no. 11 (1996): 10-20.

sexual abuse and unexamined values and attitudes in the patriarchal society.

Second, the pastor as a liberated person needs to know the nature of the sexual abuse experience, that of the power-over, ill-being, and silence. The nature of the sexual abuse experience is a challenge directed to world views in the most basic imagery levels. When the pastor grasps it, it has significant consequences for his/her ways of knowing God, power, relations, and sufferings. The pastor may stop relying upon the image of almighty God to console sexual abuse survivors since the way he/she approaches power is the same in the imagery level as the way the abuser approaches and defines what power is, that is, “power-over.” It is what sexual abuse survivors experienced as violence in their lives. The love of God is not that of the power-over. The liberation of God is not that of the imposing force. It is the power generated inside, gently, lively, creatively, and persistently flowing out to nurture life. Without a change in the image of power, the pastor is less effective both in communicating and creating the experience of “power-with” in the congregation. However, if genuinely touched by new images of power, relations, and human sufferings, the pastor is not only liberated but liberating. The liberated pastor touches untapped resources in sexual abuse survivors, and guides the congregation to the community of liberation and healing.

Third, when the pastor is prepared on intellectual and attitudinal levels, his/her preaching creates a context for the work of healing. In preaching, sexual abuse is addressed, communicated as ethical, psychological, and spiritual issues, and deeply concerned as a crucial situation in which the Christian faith must validate itself by taking a stance on it. Thus guiding begins. The congregation is guided to think and respond to the issues addressed by the pastor. Sexual abuse survivors are guided to remember the abuse

incident in their lives and name the abuse as violence and claim their power to tell the truth. When preaching addresses the issue of sexual abuse, it gives permission to the congregation, especially survivors, to think about what is thought of as unspeakable. It gives hope and the assurance of safety to sexual abuse survivors and that is therapeutic. They begin to remember, with permission and a sense of safety, what was blocked. Under pastoral guidance, traumas in their lives are mobilized into a search for life.⁸² Preaching provides the means of permission, safety, and hope and thereby is fundamentally an act of pastoral counseling.⁸³

Fourth, preaching creates a context in which reconciliation is facilitated. The pastor cannot make the congregation reconcile with God or with themselves. Verbal formulations, though they have their value, are powerless to create the experience of reconciliation. Such powerlessness is true in relation to traumatized persons because of their experiences of betrayal in the past. When genuinely done, however, preaching guides the congregation to experience themselves as persons before God, as broken and yearning. It also guides them to respond in trust to grace and love. When the pastor is congruent in the way he/she deals with the issue of sexual abuse and is concerned with survivors as persons, preaching elicits a reconciling perspective in the congregation. Though the question of "Why, God?" may not be answered in a clear-cut way, sexual abuse survivors know that they are being guided to transform their pain into a search for life again.

Finally, preaching guides the congregation to respond to those hurt and silenced.

⁸² Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (Garden City: N. Y.: Image Books, 1979), 93.

⁸³ Edmund Holt Linn, *Preaching as Counseling: The Unique Method of Harry Emerson Fosdick* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1966), quoted in Donald Capps, *Pastoral Counseling and Preaching: A Quest for an Integrated Ministry* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 14.

Preaching that begins with people's real problems such as the trauma of sexual abuse creates a unity based on the shared confession of basic human brokenness and on a shared hope. It provides an atmosphere in which telling the truth is understood as a way to liberation and that confidences are kept but destructive secrets are eradicated with safety and care. The congregation is transformed into a sanctuary community, a sacred place in which people experience God's love and a safe place in which they claim their rights and dignity in the name of God. The sanctuary community not only sustains sexual abuse survivors but heals and liberates them. In the guidance, it provides support groups, healing workshops, seminars on violence, and opportunities to advocate for change in society. Therefore the pastor as a liberated and liberating person utilizes preaching as a powerful means to change the congregation into a sanctuary community, a community that bears God's love and liberation.

The Korean church has experienced its ability to care centering on the two pastoral functions, sustaining and guiding, in the way that they are a vantage point from which other functions are facilitated. Korean pastoral care is also communal in nature and heavily relies upon the role of preaching as a guiding function. In the proceeding paragraphs, I applied the tradition of Korean pastoral care to the care of sexual abuse survivors. In the next section, I place pastoral care in interpersonal relations and provide some guidance for working with sexual abuse survivors in the context of the Korean church.

Working with Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Suppose you are a pastoral caregiver approached by a woman identifying herself as a survivor of sexual abuse, how do you respond? Where do you start? Where do you stop? What resources do you have in order to identify where she is in her healing process and in

which direction she should go? I will address these questions in this section.

For this task, I use two models. One is a general recovery process from sexual abuse and the other is the model of women's ways of knowing, discussed in Chapter 5. I use these two models to posit pastoral care in the recovery process of sexual abuse and explore possible ways in which the pastoral caregiver can become involved and contribute to the healing journey of sexual abuse survivors.

Healing from sexual abuse is a long-term process. Its nature and goals are complicated and defined in various terms of the different approaches involved.⁸⁴ Although there is not a clear-cut formula about its nature and process, it may be useful to start with a general recovery process outlined in a chronological order. This model will be used as a guide for the pastoral caregiver to identify the survivor in the chronological recovery process.

Healing from sexual abuse proceeds in four stages.⁸⁵ The first stage of "impact" is the response to the immediate after-effects of a sexual assault. The victim in this stage is in a state of shock, and her needs for safety, medical care, or reporting to the police are urgent issues. This stage may last from a few hours to several days. The second stage of "denial" is the latent period in which the effects of sexual abuse are repressed or dismissed, probably as an attempt to return to the pre-crisis level of functioning and regain control. This stage may last a few weeks or sometimes years. The third stage of "process" is the period in which professional help is sought. This stage is usually precipitated by an

⁸⁴ See Dolan who approaches healing from sexual abuse from an Ericksonian perspective and Herman who researches the issue from a feminist, object-relational perspective.

⁸⁵ Chris Servaty, "Support Counseling with Victims of Sexual Assault," in *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*, eds. Mary D. Pellauer et al. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 131-34.

emotional distress or an event that triggers the survivor's trauma and motivates her to resolve it. This stage may last a few months or several years. Finally, the last stage is the "integration" period in which the victim integrates her split life to reflect her growth and wholeness. It is not uncommon, however, for survivors of sexual abuse to return to previous stages and old issues when a new crisis arises.

The process of recovery from sexual abuse evolves from and aims to meet the different needs of the victim/survivor. The role of a pastoral caregiver needs to be flexible to meet the needs of individual survivors. For example, the pastoral caregiver may give priority to the victim's emotional and physical safety and medical care in the first stage, the victim's needs for security and control in the second stage, her needs to resolve trauma-related symptoms or issues in the third stage, and to develop a healthy future orientation in the last stage.⁸⁶ Although all the survivor's needs are interrelated, some will emerge as more primary than others as time passes. We see the interviewees in this study to be in transition between the second and third stages. The women had passed the denial stage and wanted to tell the truth as a way of healing their major symptom of sexual abuse, secrecy. Since this study is limited to the group of survivors in the transition from silence to speaking, pastoral care will be explored with respect to this group in the recovery process.

The model of women's ways of knowing is another useful tool. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is an epistemological development with five stages or perspectives. The first stage is "silence" in which the woman experiences herself as voiceless and mindless due to the lack of self. The second stage is "received knowledge" in which the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 131-34. See also Cooper-White, 229-51, and Herman, 155-213.

woman knows truth as her society knows it and is not yet capable of creating knowledge on her own. The third stage is “subjective knowledge” in which the woman makes truth claims according to her firsthand experiences and conceives of truth and knowledge as personally and subjectively known. The fourth stage is “procedural knowledge” in which the woman applies objective procedures to obtain and communicate knowledge. The fifth stage is “constructed knowledge” in which the woman views all knowledge as contextual and created, and experiences herself as capable of creating knowledge on her own.

This model provides a map of intellectual development to identify where the survivor is. More importantly, it offers an ear with which to hear where she is speaking from and from what perspective she makes truth claims. With this map and an attentive ear, changes in perspective, voice, and self when a survivor speaks, may be traced. As discussed in the previous chapter, we find the interviewees in this study to have experienced changes in their perspective, voice, and self which helped them break the silence on their abuse experiences. They are in transition between the second and third stages and on the way to becoming subjective truth-seekers. Shame and guilt as remnants in the received position on the one hand, and anger and firm beliefs as activated in the subjective position on the other, condition the inner world of the survivors and buffet them from within. As shown in the proceeding paragraphs, this group of survivors of sexual abuse are also those who are aware of the effects of sexual abuse in their lives and yearn to heal themselves. Therefore, this group of sexual abuse survivors share the characteristic of willingness to deal with the sexual abuse in their lives and search for truth. Suppose the pastoral caregiver works with this group of survivors.

I return to the question, “How can the pastoral caregiver help those women in

transition?” Although there are many, I suggest some guidelines for working with sexual abuse survivors.

First, most importantly, the pastoral caregiver must examine his/her assumptions and beliefs. Because the nature of sexual abuse is interwoven with cultural beliefs and social structures, pastoral care of survivors turns out more often than not to be uncaring, when approached with unexamined value systems. In this respect, the five epistemological categories discussed above are applicable not only to sexual abuse survivors but also to pastoral caregivers. It is important for the caregiver to know from what perspective a survivor presents her issues. It is more important for the caregiver to know from what perspective he/she as the caregiver speaks to the survivor. If the pastor, for example, is a received knower, shame and helplessness, instead of caring and hope, may be communicated in the way he/she approaches the sexual abuse and pictures a survivor's future. The pastor may actually guide the survivor to live as a received knower, accommodating shame and guilt rather than freeing her, since his/her perspective is limited. In such a case, the pastor needs to sensitize himself/herself with data and study about sexual abuse. Life stories of survivors help the pastor to understand the issue from the inside and to make critical evaluations of cultural values as well as of his/her attitudes and beliefs. Self-examination on the part of the pastoral caregiver is a crucial factor for creating genuine caring.

Second, when the pastor meets with the survivor, it is essential to establish a safe environment. The pastor should be the “safe” person since this dimension of personality is fundamentally betrayed and questioned in sexual abuse. Safety is created and communicated in multiple ways. It is created not by words but by attitudes when the

pastor relates to the survivor as a person who deserves respect, care and blessing, not pity or prejudice. Helping attitudes in general, identified in studies of trauma, contribute to establishing a safe environment. The pastor needs to communicate the following messages to the survivor.

1. I believe you. It takes a lot of courage to take this step, telling about the abuse.
2. This should never have happened to you. It is not God's will for you.
3. This is not your fault. Responsibility should be placed on the person who misused his/her power.
4. You deserve care and healing. You have choices now.
5. I stay committed to your safety and to the truth.

Safety is felt when the pastor attentively listens and believes what is said. More importantly, it is felt on a deeper level when the pastor is congruent with his/her commitment to human rights and dignity. Establishing a safe environment is the very function of sustaining in pastoral care. The pastor's symbolic role and presence as well as his/her helping attitude all converge into the function of sustaining. At its deepest level, pastoral care is to restore a sense of safety to the survivor. Although necessary throughout the whole relationship, safety is the most critical element in the beginning of pastoral relationship with the survivor.

Third, when the survivor presents her issues and problems, the pastor needs to know where she is speaking from and how the issues presented are bound to her perspective. Feelings such as shame, guilt, and depression are perspective-bound symptoms in many cases. They also emerge out of the survivor's current situation, for example, trapped between isolation and abusive relationship. The pastor's training in the area of counseling

will determine the approach and to what degree to become involved in the survivor's problems. It may be wise and practical to refer the survivor to other mental health professionals. It is also wise and practical to continue to work with the survivor when her problems are those involved with changes in perspective, voice, and self. There are rich resources in the community of faith to empower such transition in the lives of survivors. It is also the pastor who symbolically stands for transformation and guides people to the state of new being. When professional helpers are limited in number, the church and the pastor, found in every Korean town and village, are real assets to the pastoral care of trauma survivors.

Finally, I think that the autobiographical material developed in Chapter 5 may be used in individual sessions as well as for the group pastoral care. The life themes in the material are based on the experiences of sexual abuse survivors, and questions are offered to elicit their abuse memories and integrate them. Since there are few resources for sexual abuse survivors in Korea, the material may serve as valuable information for the pastor counseling sexual abuse survivors. It may also serve as a concrete tool with which to work with sexual abuse survivors in a group in the church. When the pastor works with sexual abuse survivors with this material, I think, the function of guiding in pastoral care is contextualized for sexual abuse survivors. I hope that through the material, the pastor's guiding function can be more suited to the needs of sexual abuse survivors.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

I began this study with the thesis: An analysis from cultural, psychological, and theological perspectives of the subjective experiences of women, who have been sexually abused and who have broken their silence, reveals: (1) the destructive effects of sexual violence, (2) the way Korean culture relates to sexual abuse survivors, and (3) healing resources to meet survivors' needs and empower their journey of healing from sexual abuse.

With this thesis, I interviewed Korean female survivors of sexual abuse, which is, I think, the core of this study in that their stories are finally heard, as presented in Chapter 3. The stories of the women helped me understand spirituality in relational terms, and thereby more comprehensively understand the destructiveness of sexual abuse suffered by Korean female survivors long after the sexual abuse ended, and even when it is studied.

The destructiveness of sexual abuse is complicated and perverse when it occurs in the context of Korean culture. Sexual abuse harms the core of women's relational self, destroys their positive sense of the self, threatening meaningful relationships. Sexual abuse does harm to the relational self in the very context of relationships and connections, not only with male but with everything critical for self-growth as well as survival in the society.

Therefore, the destructiveness of sexual abuse is deep down inside the survivors, tearing up the meaning and purpose they have cherished. Such destructiveness of sexual abuse in the context of Korean culture is discussed in Chapter 4 in terms of self-image, intimacy, community and spirituality. It is against such destructiveness where survivors'

spirituality is the most palpable: given an atmosphere of care and safety, the constraints of silence and secrecy give way to the fundamental, human need for speaking, a metaphor of the human capacity to be relational. and thus being spiritual. The meaning of telling the truth was examined from cultural, psychological, and feminist perspectives in Chapter 5. I addressed the power of telling the truth and applied it to the role of those giving pastoral care to sexual abuse survivors, developing a model of survivors' autobiographical material, in Chapters 5 and 6.

When I come to the conclusion, I think again that the trauma of sexual abuse is not ended when the sexual abuse ended, nor when it is studied. Through this study, I am more keenly aware of the forces that silence the voices of sexual abuse survivors, whether they are social, cultural and religious forces, or intrapsychic traumas inside sexual abuse survivors.

I am convinced, however, the ethic of secrecy does not make any difference in the lives of sexual abuse survivors or in society since "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."¹ It is clear the perpetrators and those who support them are not those who are likely to tell the truth, for they are allied with and identified with the system in which sexual abuse takes place.

Precisely against those backgrounds, telling the truth about one's own abuse is extremely difficult. Nevertheless it is the most effective means of bringing about effective changes in society as well as in the survivor's life. Telling the truth about abuse is significant for restoring justice to society and wholeness to the survivor of sexual abuse.

I am aware that my energy was mostly directed to unmasking, and less to

* Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Trumansburg, N. Y.: Crossing Press, 1984), 110-13.

reconstructing the context in which sexual abuse survivors live. I addressed problems involved in traditional notions of God and made suggestions on a conceptual level. I did not delve into the issue of what images of God are emerging from the experience of survivors to meet their needs for healing. In addition, I paid little attention to what aspects of Korean culture have helped or have potential to empower sexual abuse survivors to name and give expression to their abuse experiences. These issues are open to further research.

Appendix A:
Research Letter of Explanation Sent to Crisis Counseling Centers

November 13, 1995
Myung-Sook Lee
1771 Shenandoah Dr.
Claremont, CA, 91711, USA

Dear Director,

I am writing to get your help in the contact with women survivors of sexual abuse for my research. My research interest is in the analysis of subjective experiences of women survivors of sexual abuse with a particular attention to the impact of telling-truth on healing process from cultural, psychological, and theological perspectives. This study is part of my Ph. D. thesis in Pastoral Care and Counseling at Claremont School of Theology at Claremont, California in the United States.

As a pastoral counselor and a Korean woman who has come out as a survivor of sexual abuse, I have known the destructiveness of sexual abuse and the necessity of research on survivors of sexual abuse. One of my particular interests is in understanding the way Korean culture relates to female survivors of sexual abuse and its impact on their experience of sexual abuse. My another major concern is about a possible relationship between the process of healing and the process of coming out as a survivor and telling the truth about abuse. For this project, I plan to interview with sexual abuse survivors who meet two conditions among the group of Korean adult women: (1) who have been sexually abused in childhood or/and as adults, and (2) who have spoken out and no longer keep their abuse in secrecy.

If you know any women who meet the two conditions above, please help me contact them. I greatly appreciate your consideration of my requests and your support for this study.

For your reference are enclosed a copy of letters which will be sent to you directly from Drs. Marjorie Suchocki (Ph. D., Vice President & Dean) and William Clements (Ph. D., Edna and Lowell Craig Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling & the Chair in my Dissertation Committee). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My home phone number is 909-625-2783 in USA and 02-998-0305 in Seoul. I plan to have a research trip to Korea and stay in Seoul for two months, Dec. 5, 1995 to Feb. 5, 1996.

Thanks for your help!

Sincerely,

Myung-Sook Lee

Appendix B:
Interview Consent Form

Dear

Thank you for your interest in my research on women's experience of sexual abuse and speaking-out process. This is part of my Ph. D. thesis at Claremont School of Theology in the United States. My thesis is: "From Silence To Speaking: A Pastoral Approach to Empowering Voices of Korean Female Survivors of Sexual Abuse."

The purpose of this letter is to explain my research plan to you. Also, I am enclosing an interview-consent form which I need you to sign and return. The method I use in my study is a qualitative one. It means that I seek to understand your internal experience of sexual abuse and discover deeper meaning of what you have experienced as a survivor of sexual abuse. In this way I hope to answer to my research questions: What might it be like to be a Korean adult woman who has been sexually abused and has to deal with the fact in her society ?; How does she reach the point to break the silence and what is its impact on the healing process?; How can religion be of help in the healing process of a woman survivor of sexual abuse?

With your help, I want to study about women's subjective experiences of sexual abuse which is little explored in our Korean society. I truly feel that your story will be valuable to my study and deeply appreciate your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Myung-Sook Lee

Interview Consent

I agree to participate in a study of women's subjective experiences of sexual abuse as described in the attached letter. I understand the purpose of this study and participate voluntarily. I also understand that the data is used in completing a Ph. D dissertation and grant permission for this. I know that my name and other personal information which might identify me will not be used.

I agree to participate in two interviews each of which lasts for three hours and to be available at a mutually agreed time and place. I grant permission for the tape recording and transcription of the interviews.

I also know that if I have any distresses after the interview I have, I will be immediately responded by the primary researcher or the related director of the center.

Research Participant: _____

Date: _____

Primary Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C:

Interview Questions

1. Would you please tell me the story of your healing journey? Looking back, how would you like to describe your experience of the abuse? And, how did you deal with the abuse?
2. Would you tell me what led you to break silence and speak about the abuse? Looking back, what persons, experiences, environments, and beliefs precipitated and facilitated your breaking silence? What factors led you to disclosure after silence?
3. Did you experience any pressures to be silent about your abuse? If so, what factors contributed to your secrecy, and what was the most difficult to you in breaking silence?
4. If religion is important to you, would you talk about it in relation to your decision for self-disclosure? In what way did spirituality and religion help you tell the truth, and in what way did they silence you? What teachings and doctrines from your religion became roadblocks on your path of healing, and what new religious understandings do you have based on your experience as a survivor? What does spirituality mean to you in your healing journey?
5. What do you think is the role of religious leaders in your healing journey? How might they be helpful for your healing? Is it possible that they might be harmful even with their best intention for you, and if so, in what way?
6. If you changed through your experience of speaking about abuse, how would you describe and explain it? Compared with when you were silent, how do you see yourself now differently in terms of your relationship with yourself, your family, others, the future, and your spirituality or relationship with God, if you are religious? What words come to your mind to describe the change in you?
7. What has been the most healing experience to you in your recovery process? What does healing mean to you?
8. Now that you have spoken about the abuse, I wonder whether you have any regrets at taking time to break silence and whether you wish that you had disclosed the abuse earlier. Or, have you ever had a time when you regretted breaking silence and wished that you had not spoken about the abuse? If any, would you talk about it?
9. Suppose that you are writing about your healing journey in a book. If you were to divide your healing story into chapters, what would the chapter divisions look like? Where would you start the first chapter and end the last one? What stories or experiences might be in each chapter?
10. In your story, if you were interested, what role would you like to attribute to God?

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